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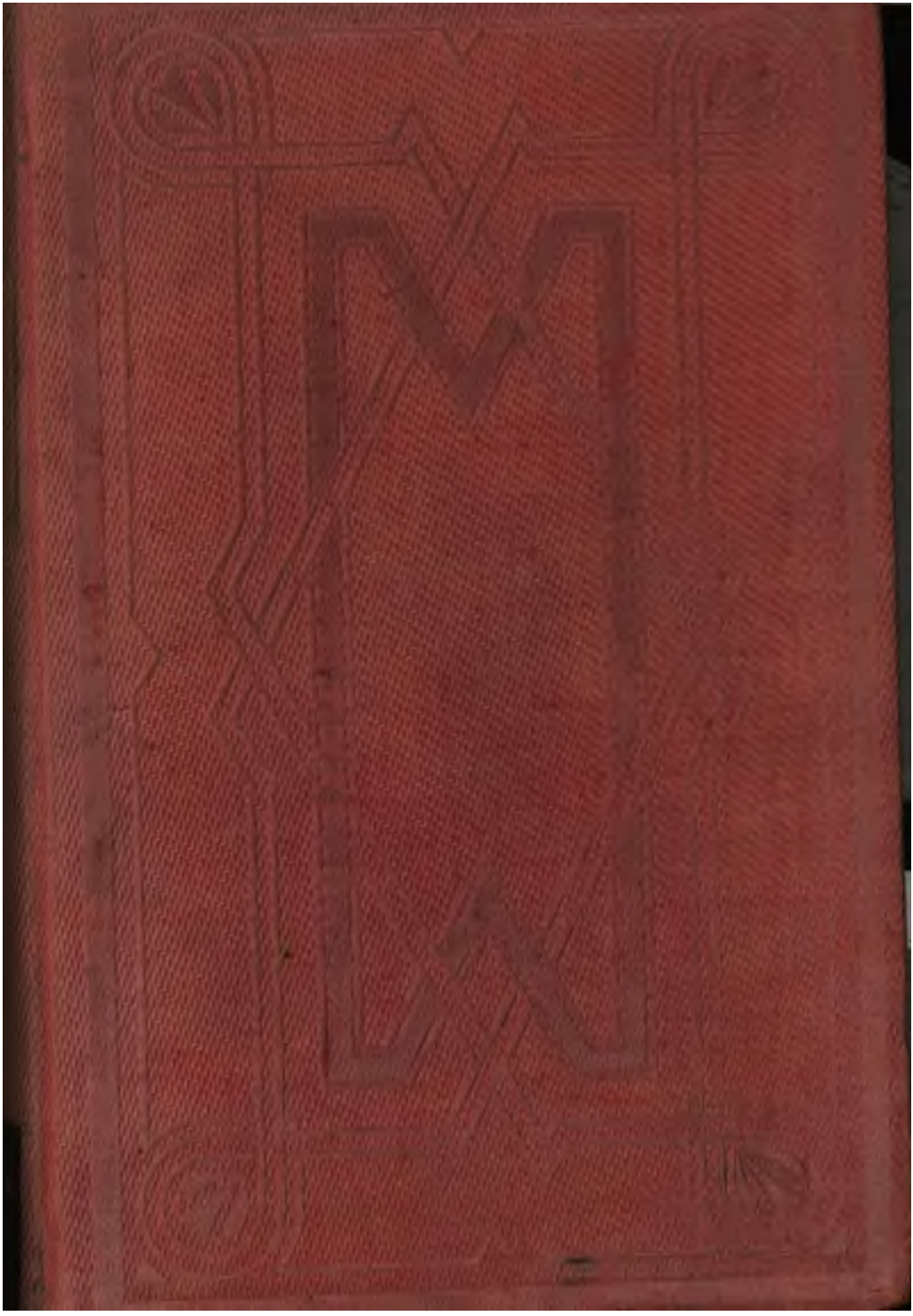

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BLIGHT;

OR,

THE NOVEL HATER.

THE GULL — OR PIRATE'S CAVE

OF BLACK ROCK.

BLIGHT;

OR,

THE NOVEL HATER.

A Tale of our Own Times.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"GOOD IN EVERYTHING," ETC., ETC.

To trim Heaven's lamp of Genius is no "creature task;"
'Tis an inspired and a spell-wrought act
To humanize the Ideal. Raise thou the mask
Of fairy FICTION, and reveal the FACT.

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BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA ·

BLIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

"Flow on! Flow on!
Life's tide. It ebbs and flows:
For ever changing. 'Tis fathoms deep,
Then shallow as a stream."

A WEEK elapsed, and Ernest Morley had left Doverton to return to the old Court for a few days previous to his departure for the Continent. The place had regained its wonted tranquillity, for the hurry and excitement of the election was over, Sir Edward having been returned member for the county by a large majority. The calm succeeding so important an event was very much relished by the inmates of Morley Court, whose stately grandeur and repose seemed ill to brook so unusual a hubbub as

had been witnessed within its walls during the last fortnight. We must make one exception, in Miss Gertrude, who, girl-like, had enjoyed the bustle exceedingly, and had now gone to stay in London with her married sister, finding the relapse into stillness very irksome. It was the evening after Morley's arrival at home, and he stood on the old stone steps of the terrace, his arm encircling his mother's waist, and his gaze bent listlessly upon the playing fountain beneath them. They were silent for some moments, and as they stood there, side by side, there could be no doubting the relationship between them; hardly could there be a more striking resemblance between a mother and her son—her only and her darling one. There was the same clear and open brow; the same loving eye in each; the same kindly mouth, with its expression of contentment and peace; and, as her eyes wandered in the direction his had taken, the profile of each face was as similar as was possible allowing for the difference of sex.

"Why don't you propose to her at once?" asked the mother at length, in a low voice.

"It would be useless, mother; I feel sure of it. God knows in what I can have offended; but that her feelings are changed towards me (if they ever were what I hoped) is very evident. Perhaps I deceived myself; but if it was only friendship, that, for some cause or other, has sadly changed."

"I cannot think you were deceived; in fact, I am sure the dear girl loved you, Ernest. She looked so blooming and beautiful the day she rode here, just before she left, the day of her uncle's dinner party. We watched her canter across the Park from my dressing-room window as she came, and her face and figure all spoke of happiness. Perhaps it is simply her concern for poor Eve Ending which has caused this change. You say she looks pale and thin."

"Very, and her manner not like her own, to me at least," added the young man, with a sigh.

Once more there was silence for some

moments, when Lady Morley again broke it,—

"I suppose she will be down here on her uncle's birthday; the old man will never spare her then. I hear there is to be a *fête;* tents pitched, if not too chill, and quite a merry-making. He wants us all to be present, and expressed his sorrow that you would be away. I am vexed too, as things might, perhaps, have been explained, and all put to rights. Your father wishes me to ask Lady Emily de Vere, that she may attend with us; but I cannot help it, I must disobey him for once. I cannot like her, Ernest."

But Ernest made no reply; his attention appeared wholly engrossed by his own reflections.

"What is your busy brain debating now, son of mine?" asked the lady, fondly kissing his cheek.

"I was only wondering, dearest mother, if that Captain Riggin was present at the old General's last 'feed.' I met him in London the other day, and his words, when speaking

of Miss Lindsay, flavoured rather more of familiarity than was exactly pleasing to my ears. Do you think anything can have taken place in that quarter? The General favours him, I think."

"Never think of it, my son; Rose holds him in great contempt I know, and regards him as a foolish coxcomb."

"Yes; but Rose loves her uncle, and would do much to please him."

"Never *that*. Rose has too much good sense, and too much insight into character, ever to trust the keeping of her life in such hands, even to please her devoted old uncle."

"Look! here comes the old boy with my father. Now, he'll want my meerschaum. Look! mother, what a contrast there is in those two. Isn't he jabbering away; there! he's made my father laugh heartily; that's what he likes. Doesn't he look a jolly old fellow? I shouldn't think he'd ever known a care."

"I'm not quite so sure of that," said Lady Morley as she turned to enter the house.

Before retiring to rest that night Morley sat down to write a few lines to Ralph Thornton; perhaps, if anybody had asked him for what purpose, he would have been puzzled how to reply. The day on which they were to commence their journey had been appointed, and the hour they were to meet at Morley's Hotel specified; therefore, he had really no occasion to write, as not any one at Sea View had expressed any desire to hear whether he reached home in safety or otherwise. Still he continued to pen incipient nothings,—concluding the epistle without any apparent reason for his communication. But there was a postscript added, in which, perhaps, the real purport glimmered:—

"P.S.—I quite forgot to mention to Miss Lindsay about that poor creature on the beach at Black Rock. I told the good woman (Bertram, I think, is her name) who takes care of her, that I was sure a young lady, a friend of mine, would kindly go and see her. Will you ask Miss Lindsay, with my kind

regards, if she will do that little favour for me? If her heart is the same as in former times I know it will respond to the cry of distress and suffering; and I have too high an opinion of it to think, for a moment, that in that respect it will ever change."

Rose happened to be in Ralph's study, whither she had gone with a message from Mrs. Thornton, when the letter reached its destination. There was no awkwardness of manner, or even reserve, existing between these two (at least not more than was natural in Ralph, in his intercourse with everybody). There was nothing to denote that any words had passed between them of an otherwise than ordinary nature. Indeed Rose had fallen back into her old quizzical, bantering strain when she addressed him, and he smiled grimly or looked sulky as of old; now, however, as he handed her Morley's letter and pointed to the postscript, she knew his penetrating eye was fastened upon her countenance with a good deal of

meaning in it, and, consequently, she interrogated him immediately regarding the poor woman she had been asked to visit. But little had the Artist to say about her, further than she was one of the "finest studies" he had ever taken.

"Have you the likeness here? I should like to see it. Poor soul! and quite silly; how shocking!"

Ralph moved aside some half-dozen unfinished paintings and took from behind them the little water-coloured copy.

"Oh! how lovely; isn't she? What's her name? She don't look like a poor woman."

"She is poor enough though; all in rags. They call her Lady Vernon."

"Lady Vernon! Then she can't always have been poor."

"I'm sure I don't know the history of her career. You must ask Morley; he went and sat in the old woman's kitchen, and asked two hundred questions about her, I fancy. She's a beautiful 'study,' that I do know. Did you

ever see such a splendid eye, for the quiet kind? It can look fierce enough, though."

"Why, dear me!" exclaimed Rose suddenly, and then was silent.

"What's the matter?"

"Don't you see a likeness? How very strange!"

"I know what you mean. Yes, I have seen it. I thought so the first time I ever saw the face. But the expression of this is quite different; it does away with the likeness, to my mind."

"It does not do away with similarity of feature," said Rose; "the top part of the face is exact. May I take it and show it to Eve?"

"Yes; but for goodness sake to no one else, or there'll be a hundred questions as to where I did it, and a hundred sneers about it."

"Well, what does it signify if there are? Hands off, Pompey!" as Ralph endeavoured to take it from her. "You stupid chap! I'm going to show it, only to Eve; and

she may see anything 'vile mortals' do, mayn't she?"

"Well, I wish you'd go away," muttered Ralph, rudely; "I want to get on with what I'm about."

"Good day, then, 'courtier.'"

And as Miss Lindsay ascended the staircase with the portrait in her hand, she held it before her, and murmured, "How extraordinary that such an uncouth bear as he should represent life so beautifully. It seems all lost that he should be gifted so highly; he values his talent at too low a price. I hope he'll find that out, with other things, before he dies."

Eve had gone to lie down on the couch in her sleeping-room, as was her usual custom in the afternoon of each day; languor generally oppressed her at that period, especially if visitors had paid their *devoirs* in the morning, which had been the case on the day in question, among whom had appeared that "consistent" lady, Aunt Maria, whose chief talk had been on her favourite theme, "con-

sistency." So long had been her harangue that the poor fragile bud had well nigh closed with very weariness, and now sank into a kind of lethargy, as if caring to open into life and vigour no more. In vain had Rose tried to rouse the drooping spirits and win the pent lips into a smile of merriment. She had taken off "Miss Maria Blue," as she ironically called her, as only a mimic, and a clever one, could do.

Miss Maria had had an attack on the previous Sunday "of her complaint," of which, by the bye, no one living knew the name or the quality. She had been too ill to leave her room, and, consequently, Miss Lindsay and her Aunt Rachel had called after church, and had walked noiselessly up the stairs to see her; Rose expecting, at all events, to find a white face, or a very red one, or some symptoms of an invalid; but, to her unmitigated astonishment, she found nothing of the sort, only a lady dressed in the very height of fashion, arrayed in a splendid robe of black velvet with short sleeves, pearl orna-

ments, and head dress to match, (a true incident in a lady whose constant theme was "consistency;" who deplored its want in all her relatives and associates). And Miss Maria's manner and conversation, together with her sighs and moans, were admirably taken off for the amusement of the drooping girl, but with little success to-day; she seemed languishing indeed. And as Rose entered with the portrait she only half-unclosed her eyes and said, "Make haste, dear Rosey; I want you to talk to me again. I must seem very ungrateful, but I cannot laugh to-day; let us talk of something serious. No, no; of nothing melancholy," as Rose shook her head; "it need not be melancholy because it is serious, Rosey."

"No, nor shall it."

Rose put her arm round Eve, whose two slender ones were already clasped round her. "Now, look here; is not that a beautiful face?"

There was no answer. Rose waited for a minute or two, but still no sound issued from Eve's lips. She held the small painting in

her trembling hands, and by degrees all colour fled from cheek and lip. Rose feared she would faint, and tried to release the portrait from her grasp, but she still held it closely; and while her eyes glared wildly on those before her, she muttered, in tones almost inaudible, "This is the face I have seen from babyhood; this the dear vision I have nurtured here!" placing her hand on her heart. "This the sweet spirit which has haunted my dreams from very infancy."

"Dear Eve, I must take it away now; I am sorry I have shown it to you; you look so white and ill. Tell me what you mean,—you have never seen this face before?"

"Dear Rose, I must appear very foolish, but—oh, dear!" And the fairy head sank on the kind breast ready to receive it, and the relieving tears choked utterance.

"I have dreamt of that face often, oh! how often. Would that in this world I could only see the reality instead of the ideal. Where—how, did you get that?" she added.

"Eve, if I thought it would not make you ill, I would tell you all about it, but I am afraid. Why should the picture of a stranger, and a poor woman, too, move you so?"

"Is she poor? Then that is realized,—that part of the night's teaching. Rose, listen to me."

Eve stopped and placed her hand in Miss Lindsay's; the latter, bewildered, yet anxious, with some unknown fear, begged her to be composed and try to sleep, and tell her at some future time; but Eve, raising herself, sat upright upon the couch, and, confronting her friend, said firmly and gently,—"Rose, you know I have not very long to live. Do not interrupt me," as Rose was about to speak. "You know my time is nearly spent; my short race nearly run. You know, also, that some strange mystery hangs over me, at least, is akin to me. I shall die soon, and perhaps, and most probably, it will die with me. But Rose, do you think I have not felt this day by day—

year after year. Sometimes timid and weak, as all think me, I have been going to ask uncle to tell me all; for he knows it, Rose, whatever it may be, if my parents, either of them, are living, or if both are numbered with the dead? Something tells me they, or one, at least, is still in existence. You will not laugh, as many would, at maybe the ravings of a dying girl. But I feel the truth of what I say, here!—here! Rose, do not cry, you dear, dear friend! I know how you feel for me. I am not excited, indeed I am not; only tell me if you can manage anyhow for me to see the original of that picture once—only once! Be she ever so poorly clad I should know her, as in my dreams. She has been tried, like our Saviour, Rose. Yes, God has told me so. 'He speaks once, nay twice, when deep sleep falleth upon men.' But say not a word, Rose; keep my secret and aid me. Ralph has done that; I know his painting anywhere. Poor Ralph! Poor fellow! Ask him where she is, and secretly take me to her. Don't look so frightened;

I am quite myself; and Rose, again I say, I have not long to live, and a dying request is a sacred thing. But I shall not die just yet," she added, as Rose sobbed aloud. "Not just yet; but if I did—when I do die, Rose, why should you cry? You know I long to go; I feel so weak here, and never well. There! —oh! there! I shall be strong."

"I know you are quite ready to go, dear Eve; but think of those you will leave behind,—who will lose you they love so well."

"Only for a short time; at longest, a few years of mixed joys and pains, hopes and fears; they seem long to look forward to, but how short when they are gone! How fleetly they pass away. You must think of me in a far-off country, where all is peace, and 'we know as we are known;' bright, beautiful, and blessed!"

A long pause ensued, during which Rose's tears flowed quietly, and Eve's eyes were fixed; but her sight fell not upon things around her, to judge from the divine light

and rays of heavenly love and joy within them.

"Will you tell me all you know about *her*, and where she is?" she asked, after a time. Rose complied; but, as the reader knows, she had but little to tell, and, indeed, was almost as curious to see the poor original of the little painting as Eve was.

"I do not see how it is possible for you to go, Eve darling, when we come to think of it; Black Rock is such a distance from here. I remember passing it in a boat last summer, with uncle and aunt. It must be a long walk; and we could never get your chair down on the beach from the cliff, I'm afraid, about there; it all looked so rugged, and I should be afraid to venture along the sands all that way."

But Eve would listen to no obstacles; her heart was bent upon accompanying her friend.

"The stable-boy could draw her chair along the cliff until they came to some easy descent."

But upon this point Rose was firm, that she would not take her unless Joan went with them. Much to Rose's surprise Eve seemed greatly to object to Joan being of the party.

"I thought you were so fond of poor old Joan, Eve."

"And so I am," she replied; "but Joan knew me when I was a baby, and she seems to forget, sometimes, that I am grown out of one now. I am afraid she would tell uncle and aunt, and they would not let me go so far."

"But I should not like to run the risk of taking you without aunt knowing about it, dear Eve. In the state you are in, it would be very unwise indeed; think a little and you will agree with me."

"I do not see it, indeed; how could I hurt in my chair? Even if it is such a long way, we need not hurry. If you say anything about it aunt will want to know why I wish so much to go down on the beach when uncle orders me to be taken to the

highest places for the air. But I feel that the air from the sea would do me good."

"Well, I am sure then aunt will not object; and I must not go with you, dear Eve, unless you let me tell her."

And so, after much persuasion, Eve consented for Miss Lindsay to tell her aunt how much she longed for a good long ramble along the shore.

Rose went to seek Mrs. Thornton accordingly, who made no objection when she found Joan was to go in charge of Eve, nor did she appear surprised at this sudden desire, merely remarking, "It was surprising what funny little whims people in weak health got hold of; and that she hoped it would not be too much for the poor dear's strength."

Rose's step was light, and the door having been left ajar, her return did not arouse her friend's fixed attention, which was held in powerful sway, plainly, by some all-absorbing fascination in those delicately moulded features in the painting before her, in their expression so eloquently speaking of a

"heart's sorrow too deep for words." She still held the portrait before her, and as Rose paused to mark the strange resemblance between the living picture and the inanimate, which again forcibly struck her, she heard Eve whisper, "I could believe it; yes! but why all this secrecy, even if she is poor—if both are poor? *He* ought to have told me; perhaps he don't know it himself. It is inexplicable indeed."

"Now dear Eve," said Rose, bending gently over the wrapt girl, "I am going to take this fair lady away; you have looked at her picture enough; but if you are very good and try to forget all about her till to-morrow, if it is fine and the sun not too powerful, you shall go and see the original along with me, but you must promise not to excite yourself in the least, and, perhaps, even not speak to her, for you know she is not in her right senses, and I cannot even learn whether she is tractable or not. Now, you will promise, will you not, to be quite quiet till I ascertain how matters stand, and how her mind seems affected?"

"I will promise anything so long as I can see her; but I have seen her often enough in dreams. Some strange and cruel fatality has divided us; I have been told so often."

Rose looked at the speaker, and the earnest eye and quivering lip checked the light reply which had risen to her own. "Anybody would believe you to be a fatalist; indeed, dearest, you are wrong to place any such faith in dreams."

"Rose, you are not speaking from your heart."

Miss Lindsay felt the truth of the remark, and was, therefore, silent.

"In the 33rd chapter of Job, we are told, 'That God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men; in slumberings upon the bed; then He openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction, that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.'"

"Well, darling, you've never had any

pride to lose," laughed Rose, with a merriment she did not feel.

"Have I not? You are wrong; once my heart was most proud; most wilful."

"Well, at all events, it is most humble now; everybody knows you are humility itself. I never heard of your being otherwise."

"Only God knows the changes worked in the human heart, for He alone has wrought them. If I am humble now it is purely from those lessons He has given me. I was stubborn enough once in my thoughts, and impatient of the darkness in which He has thought proper to place me. I am reconciled now to all His dispensations, I hope, whatever they may be, through His mercy; and thank Him earnestly for this little clue to the knowledge of a face which it has been His pleasure to part from me, yet to permit me to see and love."

Tears that had been trembling dropped from the falling lids, and Rose, fondly wiping them, and taking the little white hand in her own, begged the fair speaker to say no more

upon the subject just then; adding, that if her suppositions were correct, and that she were in any way connected with the poor unknown, (which appeared most improbable from existing circumstances), it was not right to take it so much to heart, especially as it was contrary to all reason to suppose it could be any near relationship, or her uncle would never have been cruel enough to keep it from her knowledge, unless it were from the conviction that it were better she should be left in ignorance of one "devoid of understanding;" which, in her delicate health, he might have considered desirable.

The only reply given was a gentle shake of the head, and the one word, "PRIDE."

Silence reigned for a little while in the pleasant chamber where the two friends still sat, hand in hand (the consoled and the consoler). At length Eve spoke,—"You will not laugh at me, Rosey, if I tell you there is another dream, or rather vision, which has appeared to me so often of late; ay, and frequently just after that of which I have

spoken; but it is of a very different kind—all darkness and trouble; unlike the former, there is no bright gleam of a glorious future flickering through the density. No ray of hope, but sorrow and despair; and for one who is alike known to you and me. It comes so often. I have prayed not to have it, or that, if it is still sent, a light may be shown to give token that its bitter load shall pass away."

"I think I know of whom you speak; and I do not wonder at your having any dream or vision respecting him,—nor would you, Eve, if you reflected how much his heathenism (for I can call it nothing else) has troubled you,—how you have talked to him, and I know *prayed* for him too; your mind is stretched from illness and weakness. No! don't shake that little head so, and look so prophetic; you will make me frightened of you, if you tell me any more of these visions."

"I did not think you would laugh at me, Rose; you are the only person I should think

of telling of these things; they are no idle dreams—no mind wanderings. If my eyes are opened, is it for me to try and close them against those things revealed unto me?"

"No, dear Eve; but, come, we have had enough solemn talking; so, now, I am going to tell you something which will make you laugh, I fancy. The subject of these dreary visions of yours paid me a very high compliment, some days ago,—the very highest compliment he could pay; but it was accompanied by a minor compliment of so extraordinary and novel a description, under the circumstances, that really to think of it is most amusing."

"What do you mean, Rosey?" asked Eve, as the other laughed aloud.

"Now, which will you have first, the little compliment, or the big one? Oh, I suppose I must give them in due form, and so for the little one first," continued the merry girl. "Well, in reality, this is a compliment to *you*."

"To me."

"Yes; we were speaking of you, and after he had plainly stated his opinion that you were far superior to either of us, or indeed to anybody else under the sun,—so much so, that we were all '*vile things of clay*,' except you."

"Ah! that is his way; it is very silly to talk so, and still more so to imagine me different to any one else," Eve murmured, while a faint blush overspread her pale cheek.

"Well, but listen to his audacity! Actually, after insulting me, with all mankind, in this Quixotic fashion, and making out that he cared no more for me than that—" continued Rose, indignantly snapping her finger; "he actually asked me to take compassion on him, or some such stuff, —and—" and she burst into involuntary laughter.

"Do you mean that he asked you to marry him?" enquired Eve, raising her large eyes wonderingly to the face of the other.

"Exactly! after plainly stating that he thought *you* above every other mortal, and *me* no better than any other vile thing around him. Don't you call that rich, now? Capital!—" and the hearty laugh was repeated, but found no echo in the pensive listener; nor was there a word uttered in reply to this avowal; only the fair head bent lower on to the breast, so that the long hair veiled every feature.

"Well, what *do* you think of it all?—of his *insolence?*" cried Rose, impatiently.

The voice was very low which answered, and the unseen lip quivered, as it uttered,—"I cannot agree with you, that he thinks 'no better of *you* than others,' when the very offer he made you must prove otherwise. Nor do I think, when he asked you to take compassion on him, that it was 'stuff.'"

"I hardly remember if he used those words,—the thing was so ridiculous and astounding to me," replied the other, with a little renewed indignation; "and the very

idea of taking compassion on a man who is in reality over head and ears in love with another girl is *preposterous!* And, although he so strongly denies it, I am sure he is; only that he thinks you are above loving any man on earth, and is in quite a passion if one alludes to such a thing."

"And did you allude to it? Oh, Rose!" and the warm reproving blood mantled to Eve's pearly brow; "how *could* you?"

"My dear girl, I only told him, as I firmly believe, that your dear simple heart was far too child-like even to entertain a thought for him or any other man; but that I could not agree that you were above 'human love,' and surely *you* would not wish it thought that you were, Eve; but he contends that it is absolutely presumptuous to suppose you guilty of what I conclude he considers so weak a feeling, that although 'common to our kind,' such a sentiment is quite foreign to your nature; in fact, you must never *fall in love*, as it is called, or you will fall from his high standard."

"And he is right; indeed, my thoughts and affections should be fixed on higher things than those of earth—on the home to which I trust I am shortly going."

"Yes, but while one is human, it is impossible to smother human affection; and he of all others to preach, who never gives a thought to anything noble or high," said Rose, with contempt.

"Poor, poor Ralph!" was the reply. There was something in the tone, in the convulsive working of the little hand pressed so tightly over Eve's face, which made Miss Lindsay pause in her disdain, and watch the tremulous figure beside her. What could the feeling be which was so evidently rending that pure and gentle breast? Could it be pity? Such as an angel would bestow on fallen man? *Pity alone?* Or was there a frailer string of the woman's heart vibrating with the chosen chord of heaven?

"Eve, have I misunderstood you?" asked Rose. "Tell me, Eve, have I, in word or deed, wounded you? Can it be that you

have—that you *do love* Ralph Thornton?" There was no reply, but the head bent lower still, and large tears rolled one by one through the thin fingers. "O Eve! speak. I have said what I should not have spoken, And *do you* love him!"

"Hush! hush! dear Rose. In pity, if you love me, never, never say that again. I thank God that it is thus; and I thank him who has, poor fellow, in his blindness, been permitted to give me, in mine, a lesson of light! O Rose! it was needed, but it is past for ever! Do not interrupt me, I know all you would say—I tell you it is of no avail—the struggle is over, never to return. But listen to me—I have a request to make—O grant it, Rose! and may the Almighty repay you with blessings tenfold! Bear with me a little while"—and the fair head was bowed once more upon the friendly shoulder, and for a while mingled sobs alone were heard. After a time the heart-sounds were stifled, and Eve spoke in a deeper tone than was her wont. "I was going to ask

you, dear Rose, to 'make a great sacrifice,' but in so doing to sow the seeds of a rich harvest, to follow our Saviour's course, and to reap for yourself a crown of eternal glory." Miss Lindsay was silent, and Eve proceeded. "We are told that 'there is great joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,' and that if 'we bring one stray sheep back to the flock, great shall be our reward.' O Rose, you have this in your power—the glorious permission given to draw the wandering feet back to the forsaken path, and to lead them to the way so long deserted—O have compassion indeed!—grant his suit! and with your hallowed love restore his poor soul to its Maker! Will you do this great deed? Will you stretch the saving hand?" Quite overcome, the voice waxed feeble, and sank into a whispered strain, and mingling, in low murmurs, came the faint reply, "Cease, cease, Eve!—I cannot—my heart is not my own, it is bound! I cannot!" . . .

Once more did the pale moon shed her silvery rays on "Sea-View," and one gentle

beam stole lovingly into the half-curtained casement of the chamber in which Eve Ending lay. It would seem she slept, were it not for the nervous catching of the closed eyelids, whose long fringe glittering gave token of a tear. The little white hands were clasped, as if in prayer, and the open night-dress disclosed a pearly bosom, heaving with suppressed emotion. "Is the struggle over, and for ever?"—Has thy feeble will had its way?—Eve! poor flower! Hast thou had power in "thine own self" to quell the turbulent desire—to still the clinging, yearning—to hush the sad cry from the heart's main-spring!—to stifle the unanswered pang, and win the great battle *alone?—Nay, thou hast sought it where it was never yet denied!* Sweet refreshing dew has fallen upon thee, and thy scorched heart is relieved, for thy faith is tried, and thy prayer is heard. Sweetly and fervently a voice from heaven soundeth—"Eve, be strong!"

CHAPTER II.

"'Tis Nature's link—stronger than that of iron or of gold. . . . . ."

"I have a secret with my God,
Known but to him and me,
Beyond the reach, beyond the ken
Of human sympathy.

This senseless form which holds me now
Shall die, and set me free;
But I shall live an angel bright
Through all eternity."

On the gallery of the tower, built on the very edge of the Great Fall of Niagara, stand two youthful travellers, their eyes intently bent upon the mighty cataract, and following the rolling waters as they rush with their wreaths of spray, not furiously or ragingly, but with headlong force, and low, deep, con-

tinued roar, into the death-like stillness of the gulf beneath.

Although quite unlike in form and mien, with features so differently moulded, in each face the same expression may be visible at this moment—that of intense wonderment—of admiration mingled with awe. Yet in the gaze of the taller and fairer might be traced a holier feeling—one, we may almost say, of sympathy with the scene before him. It would give you the idea that his steadfast eye could verily pierce that dark abyss—ay, through!—into boundless Infinity!—a ray of the soul's light beaming from its tenement of clay. He is the first to speak—

"Well, Ralph! and what do you think of it?"

The voice, low and musical, may yet be heard distinctly, for those waters, in their green, glassy depth, do not condescend to drown it.

From deep abstraction the other starts: "Think of it! 'tis a sight I never could have conceived; surely it must be one of

earth's grandest productions. A piece of luck for me, indeed, that your father's affairs forced you to America! This scene has given my brain a wide scope, and at some future day, when I shall have arisen from the ignominious nothing I am now—when I shall have reached the goal of my ambition—I will never forget the 'key' which has unlocked for me so rich a treasury."

"That key is but an instrument in the hand of the Almighty," replies Ernest Morley, as he lays his hand on Ralph Thornton's shoulder with something like a tear in each eye. The action and the words have recalled the youth from his visionary splendour to himself again, and his present calling.

They have been nearly a week in America, and the business which his friend had stated he had to transact for his father had been unattended to, and apparently forgotten, the recollection of which flashes across Ralph's mind now, and his countenance betrays the emotion.

"What means that fierce look?" asks Morley, meeting with a good-humoured smile the knitted brow.

"I was thinking —— Well, there was something in your look, Morley, which makes me doubt ——; but, surely, you, who know my feelings so well—I would say, my principles of honour—would never dare to deceive me so. When we met in London, and you told me, that, instead of starting off for Paris as agreed, you were compelled to go first to America on your father's business, you know that I decidedly refused to accompany you, and you know the reason why. You know, also, that we nearly quarrelled on the onset of our trip, because you firmly refused to tell me what that old miser, my uncle, had forwarded; what sum of my own money he had condescended to lend me; and always put me off with your jokes, that you would be pay-master, and that I had more than enough. You remember how you begged me, as a friend, to come with you, as your father did not like your travelling

alone. You know very well that, in reality, I have barely enough for the trip to Paris and back; and now you would make me beholden to you. Yes! it is no laughing matter. You have trampled upon my feelings."

"My dear Ralph," interposes Morley, "do come down from those high stilts of yours; and do not glare at me from those fiery orbs."

"But I am not to be played the fool with," returns Ralph, more haughtily than before; but seeing the wounded expression of Morley's countenance, and remembering the many little deeds of kindness and goodly counsel he had received from him since their departure from England, he continues in a softer tone:—"There is not another man on earth to whom I could submit to be under obligation; and, Morley, there is not another who should deceive me with impunity."

"Ralph, I have not deceived you, as I will presently explain; but before I enter upon this subject will you try to undeceive yourself?

Will you listen to me for a few moments? You told me some little time ago that this scene afforded you much pleasure, and that you should never forget the 'key' which had unlocked to you such treasures—meaning my 'humble self.' Will you for a moment give yourself up again to the glories of this beauteous scene of nature, only thinking of yourself and me but as we are, as two tiny atoms among these wondrous works, yet having souls to soar above all this vast grandeur? And while our earthly eyes are being enriched and enlightened by these great treasures of nature, let our spirits mingle in love and adoration to Nature's God!"

The troubled look has passed from Morley's face, and he glances from the whirling waters up to the silvery mist above him, with the same calm look of peace and joy he wore before.

"You are a good fellow, Ernest, and all you say is true," Ralph mutters, humbly; "but I can't see what all this is to the purpose. It is not at all the place for a quarrel,

I must own, and I was a great fool to begin one here, especially after all your kindness;" his voice sinks to a whisper now; "and you have been very kind. I know you think to do other people good is the best thing one can do; but I am surprised, and, indeed, I can hardly believe that you would tell an untruth in order to do so."

"I should be very sorry to tell an untruth," Morley replies, gravely.

"Then, why, in the world, did you come to America?"

"I came, as I told you before, on my Father's business."

As Morley repeats these words, there is an unmistakeable meaning in his eyes, fully answering those which were, a minute since, raised so inquiringly, and which now droop beneath it.

"In a word, Ralph, before showing you what you have such desire to see, the works of our great masters of earth, I wished you to witness this all-wonderful one of our Divine Master, to give you (as you say) a

wide scope for *thought*, not in reference to Art only, but with regard to 'our Father, which is in Heaven.'"

We must not tarry to witness the silent, but warm pressure of hands, nor yet the trembling lip of the last speaker, but we must fly with Time, which, in these days of steam and war, seems to take flight of its very self, and whirls with the speed of lightning the old and the young away. We must call for the wings of this woe-working carrier, and fly from the Falls of Niagara—from the youthful pair descending the tower—to other scenes and other members of this history. We must fly, ay, and speedily too, to the shells and the sea-weed of Doverton Beach.

'Tis a November morning, and a dense fog has, hitherto, filled the atmosphere, obscuring all surrounding objects; but it is clearing away now, and, though still early, the red sun in the distant horizon is struggling for the mastery.

Seated in the cave, hidden by the jutting

rock, is the Lady Vernon. That cave is her retreat, the delight of her scattered senses. It is some little distance from the two solitary cottages, but the Widow Bertram ever knows where to find her charge when she is missing, for she seldom strays beyond it; hardly would she have been let to wander forth at all on such a morning, but the good old fisherman had had his summons to the "better land," and the widow's cares had been bestowed upon him during the past night, soothing the spirit so hopefully obeying the mandate.

On the smooth sand, outside the cave, are strange devices; with child-like enjoyment the Lady Vernon had marked them with a stone. Now, she sits wearily, tired of her child's-play, shells and sea-weed heaped upon her lap, and her fair head, with its long tresses, leaning against the cold, rugged cavern's side. In her childhood's hour who should have told her that such should have been its future resting-place—its chosen pillow? She starts slightly now;—there is

a distant sound above the booming of the waves. She sits erect, with lips apart, gazing on vacancy. Could human eye behold her 'twould start, horror-struck at the revelation of such a being in such a place. Although arrayed, as usual, in the dress of tattered silk, and the coarse large pinafore filled now, and wet, with the flowers of the sea, these garments cannot conceal the fact to which that eye would bear witness—that God has given in that form an image of His angels; has endowed the creature with a grace divine.

Scorn not, critic; 'tis no outstretched conception, for such are to be found, though rarely, upon earth. But the light of intellect extinguished, how sad and darkened the wreck remains! Yet who shall say, that same light that bore with it love, joy, warmth—*all good*, did it not take away cold, hatred, anger; yea, *all evil* too? . . .

The sound has ceased, whatever it might have been, and the head reclines again. The wet sea-weed is discarded, and a queer-looking

bundle is taken from the ground, and drawn to the beauteous bust. Swaying to and fro, she sings "lullaby," in sweet, plaintive accents. And there, that same eye might watch her long—hour after hour—in that lone cave, unprotected, and unblessed; yet not unblessed, for a ray from the far-off golden sun has forced its way over the briny waters and the salt foam, and with its genial warmth it comforts her numbed limbs, and she smiles and sleeps.

Two hours have glided by, and the slumber, calm and sweet as an infant's, still holds sacred the cave by the ocean's side. The sun has burst forth warm and bright, and it is scarcely like a November day. The sleeper starts again, and this time she bounds up, for the sounds draw nearer, and she peeps round the projecting rock. It is a cheerful voice she hears chatting gaily. Descending the steep, craggy pathway from the cliff is a chair, drawn by a rough little poney. In the chair reclines a young girl, unquestionably an invalid: she has a blood-

less cheek, but her eye is very bright, and it has a strange look of hope, apprehension, and longing; it is Eve Ending. She has been very ill since we left her in that fearful struggle with the pale moonbeam on her brow—so ill, that Rose Lindsay, who is walking by her side, has written to postpone her return to Teevesdale Park for the present, much to the displeasure of the old General, who, in his reply to her note, repeats continually that "she always thinks of everybody else before him, and that he shall send her new mare away, as there is no one to ride it," &c.; but Rose little minds that good old uncle's temporary anger, merely writing back to say "that she will stay with him longer than ever next time, if he is a good boy, and does not put himself into a passion." She fancies she can see him over the letter, sending all the good people of Doverton into a very warm place in his disgust, perhaps herself included, as she will not be able to preside at his birthday dinner. But Rose contents herself, that when he "cools

upon it," he will own that she is right, after all, to stay with poor Eve, who is a great favourite of his, although he has never seen her but twice in his life; but all who are in any way afflicted, the good General considers "his favourites." But what Miss Lindsay did deplore was the fact that she had hitherto been unable to perform her promise made to Mr. Morley; she had not liked to leave Eve, and consequently this was her first visit to Black Rock. Some little time had elapsed since the departure of the two young men on their travels, and they were likely to be absent longer than was at first intended. She could not help feeling that she had neglected Morley in neglecting his request, and that seemed to her a very important matter, albeit she was very angry with herself for thinking it so. And now nothing would do but Eve must accompany her. In vain Rose persuaded her to remain at home, but Eve, generally so yielding, was on this point quite self-willed, and at length coaxed Aunt Rachel into permission that she might go

her promised ramble along the shore; so Rose sallied forth on the day preceding, like a good-hearted girl as she was, and purchased that little, stunted-looking, sure-footed pony, that Eve might be conveyed in ease and safety. The latter is very pleased with the uncouth-looking animal, and praises it all the way it jogs along the cliff. Then old Joan takes the reins, and guides it down the steep descent. Eve looks beautiful, but painfully frail. She believes that she conquered in the struggle with herself that night, or rather that her heart had done so over its feelings; but we doubt if it won the victory. It is not, however, our place to pry into the matter here: we must leave the sequel to show.

"Steadily, rough Billy! don't shake your mistress," laughed Rose. This was the voice that had roused the sleeper from the cave, who, with head bent forward, her long hair floating in the breeze, is watching the little group from the rock below, which is so curved as to conceal the greater part of her

figure. Projecting for some feet along the strand, it causes in high tide a powerful break-water, but the tide is far out now.

"And the sands are dry and smooth," Rose rattles on, cheerily. "We shall have a better walk home for Billy."

"Yes; it was so kind of you to give him to me, Rosey!"—The listener strains her ear, for this voice is low and weak.—"The air has done me good, I think, but I feel very nervous to-day," continues Eve.—Could that imaginary eye we named before, gaze upon her who listens now, it would shrink almost with pain, for such deep agony is visible in *hers*—but it closes—What mysterious spell, at once bitter and sweet, can have touched her? Her face is raised, and were it not for the quivering eyelids, it would seem that of a corpse. . . . .

The group have reached the shore—Joan looks at Miss Eve; she is fainting! "Eve, darling, what is the matter?" But Eve's eyes look darting from their sockets, and now *they also close*, and she falls back insensible.

The attention of both Miss Lindsay and Joan has been so rivetted on the helpless girl, that they are totally unaware of the approaching figure, who, with head still raised, and arms thrown upward, would appear to seek from "Heaven what earth has denied her,"—until one long cry, not loud, but thrilling and heart-piercing, makes her presence known—a cry which the rocks re-echo with all its passionate yearning, and wild, soul-stirring cadence! Surely it calls for justice and for mercy—for those rights from God which have been withheld by man! 'Tis the bursting of the pent-up fount—the rushing stream of a lifetime's thoughts, feelings, and affections!

"Oh Reason, who shall say what spells renew,
When least we look for it, thy broken clue?
Through what small vistas o'er the darkened brain
Thine intellectual day-beam bursts again?
And how, like forts to which beleaguerers win
Unhoped for entrance, through some friend within:
One clear idea awakened in the breast
By memory's magic lets in all the rest!"

Those long lingering echoes have partially restored Eve's inanimate form, and she gazes fearfully upon her alarmed attendants.

"Turn the pony! Go back, Joan!—quick, for God's sake! Take her homewards! Not a word!" were sentences breathlessly uttered by Miss Lindsay.

And now with frantic force she holds that advancing figure back; she must strain every nerve, for great are the endeavours of the maniac to rush after the receding chair, and the magic of memory has raised for the moment supernatural strength. It is a blessed occurrence to Rose's mind, and denotes its presence in a trying hour—an hour such as few on earth may have to pass—that she bethinks her of the gold chain around her neck and the bracelets on her wrists: she tears the latter off, and fastens them on the struggling arms she holds. The scheme answers; the poor worn figure sinks upon the sand and plays with the baubles, smiling with delight, and the chain Rose attempts to put about her neck she twines within her hair. Some minutes pass; then Miss Lindsay lays her hand upon the noble-looking head, fondly, telling the poor creature gently, she

must go home. By dint of much perseverance she gets her presently to rise from the sand, and leads her tenderly round the rock; but Rose's courage fails a little when the Lady Vernon turns quickly aside into the cave. Following her steps, Rose points to the cottages, and desires her firmly, but kindly, to go home directly. But Rose Lindsay trembles all over when the poor lady lifts her bundle from its rocky bed as softly as she would a sleeping child, and, hushing it in her arms, winds her way homewards without taking any further heed of her companion. The watcher lingers a few moments, looking with painful interest after that retreating figure—an interest which finds vent in tears of compassion. "Truly," she thinks, "hers must have been a mighty sorrow to have wrought this, if reason were ever hers." She is so absorbed with her feelings that she does not consider how much wonder and dismay her jewels may call forth at the cottage, where God is claiming one of "His own bright jewels" now.

"I will get up early to-morrow morning, and walk here as soon as it is light, and hear all I can about her, poor soul!" is Rose's soliloquy, and then she hastens after the pony-chair.

Old Joan must have run as well as Billy, to judge by the distance intervening; but they are standing still now, and Joan is bending over her young mistress.

"She is better, Miss," is the answer to Rose's inquiry.

Both speakers are almost as pale as the occupant of the chair.

"I can't quite make out what she says, Miss."

"What is it, darling?" asks Rose, leaning over and kissing her.

"Keep silence about this—never speak of it; I don't want to come here again. I shall see her soon in heaven." . . . . . .

Eve's wishes were held sacred in one respect, and the subject was never alluded to in her presence. She was very glad to reach her own little couch in her pretty bedroom

again, where she remained the rest of the day, feeling too weak and poorly to go downstairs. Although paler even than usual as she lay watching the sunset, there was that in her face which bespoke her spirit's satisfaction and peace. Rose remarked this as she sat reading to her until the dinner-bell rang.

Now the Doctor was very testy all dinner-time, and when he heard that Eve had been out and was overtired, he observed, petulantly, glancing sideways at Miss Lindsay, that "if madcaps could not leave their mad capers behind them, they had better stay away from Sea View altogether; that the child would never have been fool enough to go too far of her own accord."

Mrs. Thornton looked uneasy, for Rose did not retort saucily, as usual, when the Doctor accused her; she was silent (indeed she had been very thoughtful all dinner-time), but she appeared annoyed by her uncle's remark, as her rising colour bore witness.

"My dear," said her aunt, looking reprov-

ingly at her provoking partner, "Eve was anxious to try Rose's kind present; the pony went so nicely, she says ——"

"We have enough *asses* at Sea View, without any ponies," quoth the doctor, ironically.

Rose bit her lip, and shortly after left the table. Mrs. Thornton also rose, and went and sat with Eve, admonishing her upon her imprudence in being out so long; whereupon Eve assured her that it was only temporary fatigue she felt, and readily promised never to go so far again.

Miss Lindsay had retired to her own room, where she sat in the dusk by the window, with her head resting on her hand. Old Joan having knocked at the door, was told to come in; but no further notice being taken of her, she toddled about very quietly, putting things in their places, not venturing an observation, although (she owned to herself) she was dying to make a good many. The late adventure had awakened all Joan's thoughts and recollections, and she was put-

ting this and that together in her mind with wonderful rapidity; but she knew her position too well to interrupt a lady's reverie. At length Rose's cogitations came to an end, and, looking up suddenly, she said, slowly, "Well, Joan, don't you think all that has happened very strange?"

"Very, miss," was the laconic reply; and the old servant busied herself putting a drawer to rights. Now Miss Lindsay knew as well as Joan herself did how great had been the desire of the latter to speak of what had passed that day, and she was, therefore, rather surprised at the shortness of the answer; but this was only a prelude—old Joan being rather a rarity, a wise woman in her way, was endeavouring to keep down her ardour. Nevertheless, it was with some excitement that she broke forth at last into a long speech relative to the mystery hanging over Eve's life and infancy, with the greater part of which the reader and Miss Lindsay are equally initiated. But neither she nor her listener could in any way conceive how

Eve's mother (if such indeed she was) could be in such a plight as they had found her. That she *was* Eve's mother none of them seemed to doubt; and with Joan's remark that, "Depend upon it, miss, that *villain Blight* (excuse me, miss) is at the bottom of this dreadful tragedy" (old Joan became sentimental in her warmth) — with this opinion, also, Rose in her heart agreed. Nevertheless, she felt the need of wisdom and dextrous management, coupled with the strictest secrecy, in unravelling this mystery; for that there *was* mystery, and, moreover, had been *great wrong*, she felt convinced— and hers was not a nature to let "WRONG" pass unheeded. But a question had occurred so often to her during her silent reflections, that, while she found it quite unanswerable, had made her shudder to contemplate. "What can my uncle Thornton have had to do with this affair?" He had many faults, she knew; but she could not bring herself to think that he would be cognizant of anything of so dreadful a nature as the utter

desertion of a woman, and, moreover, that woman the mother of Eve; nor did it seem likely that he would be linked in such a matter with a man like Blight, who, she plainly saw, he in his heart detested. And yet, she had often wondered at the strange influence "that *reptile*" (as she mentally termed him) held over the Doctor. "What could it all be?"

"You don't think Blight can be *her father*, surely, Joan?"

"God knows, miss, but I should say not, certainly; the wretch could surely never make love to his own child!"

"Don't call it making love, Joan. That he should touch such a peerless flower! but one thing is certain—*Time reveals all things.* What you and I divine may be true, and it may not be; there is more in it, I think, than either of us can see. I know what you would say, and what you think. *Don't utter it, Joan*; and remember, if such be the case, the greater need of *secrecy—profound secrecy.* While my good aunt Rachel lives"—here

Rose's eyes overflowed—"I would not have her peace broken by knowing aught against her husband. But, oh, dear! even if such is the case, Dr. Thornton is not the man to send a creature to ruin, and one, surely, that any man must have loved! But this is all conjecture—nothing more. Let us see if two women, Joan, can *keep a secret.* In the mean time, when I am gone, you must watch for me; and if there is anything in the world I can do for that poor lady, it shall be done. And now we have talked long enough about it. May I rely upon your discretion, Joan?"

"Indeed you may, Miss Rose," exclaimed Joan, who could not resist genuine tears; "and I will be guided by you entirely; for indeed I should be grieved willingly to harm anybody, especially those I have known and served so long, let their faults even be what they may. But to think, if that is *her mother*—good God!"

Aunt Thornton's voice was heard calling to Joan, and Rose was again left to her own thoughts and imaginations.

Early on the following day, Miss Lindsay walked to Black Rock; she stayed some time with the poor widow, who had been terribly alarmed about the jewels, and had had no rest all night on their account. Rose thought it best to preserve silence as to what had occurred, and merely stated that she had put them on the poor lady to amuse her, who appeared so much delighted, that she had not liked to remove them. She insisted on leaving the bracelets, which were of no great value, and then entered into conversation with Mrs. Bertram, who, however, from her recent loss and fatigue, was evidently disinclined for a chat—albeit Rose, with the tact of her sex, drew from her many little particulars regarding the Lady Vernon, and soon knew as much about her as the reader does.

Several visits did Miss Lindsay pay to Black Rock before she quitted Sea View; but on the last the good widow appeared very down-hearted, and, after much hesitation, begged her kind visitor, very respect-

fully, and apparently with much sorrow, to cease from coming.

"You know, dear young lady, what a trial this must be for me, after all your great kindness—placing young Ben at school, too——" The good woman was fain to stop—her emotion checked her.

Miss Lindsay, much surprised, demanded a little explanation, but for some time in vain. At length, after many promises on Rose's part of secrecy, she confided in a trembling tone the fact, that the brother (or he who assumed that title) of her poor charge had been very wroth some time ago at finding the Lady Vernon there, and she feared some terrible result if it in any way should reach his ears that others than he knew of her identity. This aroused Rose's curiosity to know who that brother was, and, after much perseverance, she gained from the poor woman a description of him, which perfectly satisfied her that this would-be-brother and Mr. Blight were one and the same person, although

Mrs. Bertram gave the name of *Bruce*, as before.

Rose urged her to leave that part, and retire with her charge into some distant place, offering to pay all the expenses attendant upon her removal, in order that she might dwell in peace and freedom, with no fears of being molested by this man's importunities, or troubled by the sight of him of whom she seemed to stand so much in dread. She argued that that lone shore —especially that part—was not proper for the residence of two unprotected women,—one quite helpless, too; but the widow, with much gratitude, declined the offer and the advice. She had promised the old fisherman to remain in the little property of which he was so fond, and she could not "make her heart up to leave it," she said, adding, that the old man used to say, "Never fear what man can do unto you, while you trust in God; and, besides, Miss, if that man (who I'm sure possesses some evil spirit) could hunt out my poor lady

here, so far from everybody, he could do the like anywhere, if he had a mind."

Rose had her own reasons for not thinking so, but she did not name them; and, finding all persuasion of no avail, she wrote her address, requesting that she might be applied to should the inmates of that poor cottage at any time need assistance. She left the humble threshold with blessings poured upon her from within.

On her way homeward, for a long distance, she met no living soul, except the little grand-daughter of the good old Bertram, and could not help wondering at the prattling gaiety of the child, who had so dreary an abode. Our readers, doubtless, remember her. Miss Lindsay had wished to place her at school, as well as her brother, but she could not be spared from home, being found useful, especially in watching over the "poor lady," when her aunt took needle-work up to the village, by which means the widow increased her little store.

. . . . . .

"You will come again in two or three months, Rosey dear, won't you?" asked Eve, as her cherished companion embraced her at parting.

"Oh! yes—before, if I am *very much* wanted, perhaps."

Rose answered cheerily, noticing the glistening eyes raised to her own so fondly, and whispering "Caution and secrecy" to old Joan, Miss Lindsay left Sea View and Doverton.

CHAPTER III.

"The memory of former joy, the pang of former pain,
Our early years, our early years, recall them not again."

THE morning was cold but bright, and the hoar-frost glistened on the grass. General Lindsay stood leaning over his park gate. His gates were low, so were his palings and his hedges, and his whole domain very much exposed to view. He had a horror of anything being secluded, "boxed up," as he called it. He marvelled much at the taste of his friend and neighbour, Sir Edward Morley, who would not have one old tree removed could he avoid it, and delighted in walking (moping, the old General would say) in his groves and plantations, with as much dignity as though a thousand eyes were upon him.

"My dear fellow," was the veteran's remark, "I should get heart-disease, lung-disease, or liver-disease, and die in a month, were I to do as you do; depend upon it, there is nothing brings on these complaints sooner than *gloom*,—it engenders bile and bronchitis. You should indulge in light and air; 'see, and be seen,' as they say, if you want to live long. Look at me, sir! *eighty-two* come next spring; now, where'll you find a heartier old cove? It's God's blessing, and I'm proud of it, sir! Health *is* a blessing, but it's a good deal in our own keeping, and we must do what we can to encourage it, you know."

"You have such animal spirits," was Sir Edward's reply, with the slightest possible curl of the lip.

"I have, sir, and I'm proud of them, too, sir; we're only animals, the best of us, after all. We're a superior breed to the monkey, but, upon my word, that last baboon I had sent—"

"Tush! tush! General, now don't go off

upon that nonsensical theme of yours," interrupted the baronet, with, however, a more good-humoured smile than before; and the General's merry laugh ended the argument. His merriment, though, as in many instances, was a little forced to cheer his companion. He never saw that curl upon his friend's lip, and if he had, he would not have understood its meaning; and even if he *had* understood its meaning, perhaps he would have laughed the more.

It was a very usual comment of Sir Edward Morley's, in reference to the General, "That he was one of the best creatures living, but in some cases he terribly proved his want of good ancestral blood—his *mixed* origin." Now this opinion was derived from a little anecdote related by the "mixture" himself, and one which the good old soldier was very fond of repeating, little dreaming of the contempt he aroused in his friend's mind. Sir Edward had been more than once on the point of cautioning him against the imprudence of the relation, but being so

sensitive himself, he had feared to hurt the other's feelings. He need not have hesitated, however, the General being as proud of the doings of his "ancestors" as he was of "himself," or rather of the good gifts he possessed. The simple tale, the reminiscence of which so delighted his kind heart, is soon told.

His great-grandfather, of noble lineage, thought fit to wed a humble factory girl; one to whom in his early boyhood he had plighted his troth; he thought fit to keep the faith he had sworn, to fulfil the promise he had made to one of low degree, instead of forgetting her, true and loving as she was; or denying altogether his given word, and breaking his childish vow, which it was the baronet's opinion that "he certainly ought to have done," and "that" we daresay "of a great many others beside." He could not comprehend how any man could demean himself for the sake of marrying her he most loved; he thought on such occasions it was quite possible to quell the affections; it was

because perhaps he had never been tried, for with all his self-pride he loved his own partner devotedly. But we must go back to the General standing at his gate.

Early as it was, barely ten o'clock, he had been to his farm, and walked back as briskly as a boy, to "get into a glow," as he told the old woman at the lodge, with whom he had been chatting for the last ten minutes, and whom he had now left busy, ironing. She had received various instructions from her master relative to many a poor pensioner on his bounty, and was just thinking to herself, "what a wonderful gentleman he was at his age, to be up and about on a cold windy November morning, when some folks of his standing, ah! and young ones too, were still yawning in bed." "It must be," she put her thoughts into speech here, "that he's never had any care—that's it. He can't have had; or, may be, he's cared for nothing all his life, for they say, 'all have their trials;' and he's been in the wars too—must have seen plenty of care, anyhow. Always done good, I'll be

bound; but then, he's always had the means; though some don't do it that have—that's clear. Well, I hope our dear young lady will be like him—that's all; although, really, he looks as if he'd live for ever—sure."

And, in truth, as he stood there looking up and down the road, as was his wont, he reminded one of a hale tree, whose root was so vigorous, that it would bear and blossom yet for many a year. But, somehow or other, on this particular morning, after he had stood at his gate for many minutes, and nothing particular passed either way to rouse his attention, his gaze grew abstracted, and a keen observer of physiognomy might have noted a shadow stealing over him, faint at first, but growing gradually more distinct, till it settled into an expression of doubt and anxiety. It was like a cloud floating in the western sky, and, for a moment, obscuring the golden beaming sun. But a donkey came rudely between him and the hedge opposite on which his eyes were fixed, (his mental sight had flown elsewhere), and

arrested at once all his thoughts and attention. The poor, wretched-looking brute was nibbling greedily the nettles and grass upon the dusty, frosty bank, devouring everything that came within his reach, as though food were a stranger to his palate.

"Here, Bob," shouted the General to a man rolling a side path, "take that poor creature to the stables; house him and feed him—*well*—do you hear? *He wants change of scene and diet*, like many another poor devil."

Bob tried to do as he was bid, but it was no use, the donkey would not leave his hard-earned meal, scanty as it was.

"Take this; tie it round his neck—gently! Entice, don't drive him. You wouldn't like to be drove," continued the old General, waxing fierce, as Bob seemed disposed to give the animal a kick. "Use him *well*. Do you know what I mean by *well*, eh?"

The man seemed to understand what "well" meant now, as he drew the poor

beast along, followed by his master, whose repeated orders were, "To lead him *tenderly*."

"This be's Jock Cooley's donkey," quoth Bob, with a grin from ear to ear.

"You tell Jock Cooley to come to me, and I'll pay him for the loan of it for a few days," was the reply.

The man well knew what his master's "pay" would be, and inwardly congratulated Jock upon his piece of luck.

Now, there are many people beside our dear old General who invite "donkeys" to board and lodging, with which fact our readers will, undoubtedly, agree; but there are very few who look with an eye of such brimful hospitality and intrinsic benevolence upon any of these "asses" they may entertain, as the worthy host did upon his half-starved guest that morning. He patted its bony back, and inflicted torture upon himself in thinking of the tortures it had been destined to endure, in common with all other four-footed animals of that name.

Going along, Bob acquainted his master that "Wisky" (be it known that Wisky was a very old monkey) was "worser" than ever; that "this mornin'" they was afeared "'twas all up with him."

"Was the house warm enough last night?" inquired the General.

"Oh, yis, your Honour; as hot as the 'Hinges.'"

Bob thought he had pleased "his Honour," knowing he had been in that country, but he was mistaken, and reproved for making it "too hot." Then the good old man, in his kind way, gave a long lecture about temperature, &c., to which Bob listened with his mouth wide open, but was not much edified, to judge by his countenance, which was about as expressive as that of the animal he led. A slight sensation was apparent among the men in the stable-yard on the entrance of "Bob and the ass," with the General bringing up the rear; but it soon subsided, for their master's heart was often found to be a "refuge for the destitute." While the poor beast was

comfortably installed, with a good meal before him, his generous patron discussed with an old man (the head-keeper of the monkey department) relative to Wisky's flannel waistcoats, &c. After settling some little matters in favour of the recovery of the invalided quadruman, he betook himself to the side of his hungry *protégé* in the stable. A tall noble-headed black horse in the next stall had looked down upon the intruder with evident disgust, until he heard his master's voice; he then gazed wistfully at the shabby visitor, who devoured, with fearful rapidity, the food before him. There was a twinkle in the General's eye as he watched these proceedings.

"Come, old chap! you've had enough; enough's as good as a feast, any day; remember your digestion's not strong yet. Hillo! there! quick with that tankard; now, old skinny, drink."

"Well, I'm sure; there's two——*something* together," exclaimed a merry voice at the door, and a saucy little head, with a very

wicked little "wide-awake" on, was to be seen there.

"Come in, you baggage!" cried the General. "So you're really *up* and *down* at last, eh? Now look at this wretched brute, how he tucks into all that's given him; he's not such an 'ass' after all."

"Why, uncle; good gracious! you're never giving him *porter?*" was Miss Lindsay's exclamation, for it was she.

"Yes, I am, and he enjoys it too; poor devil! He's never tasted such stuff before."

"But, surely, he's had enough; his eye looks quite dizzy; and see, he's going to lie down," remarked Rose.

"To be sure he is! that's what all people should do in his condition. Now, I've known many with *two* legs that can't stand straight, and *won't* lie down."

"O, but, uncle, you should not have made him tipsy."

"Tipsy! he's not tipsy—only just jolly and comfortable; it's quite a new phase of existence for him. Now, I should like to treat

Mr. Toddles, the teetotaller, in the same way—and see if he'd have the sense to lie down! Now, you mark my words: that ass will be 'an ass' no longer, now he knows what sort of stuff there is in the world. He'll have a long sound sleep—just the thing for him—forget all his cares, thumps, whacks, and miseries of life, and wake refreshed and enlightened."

"Well," said Miss Lindsay, seating herself in the straw, by the side of the recumbent donkey, "I'm very thirsty myself, and that porter looks tempting."

"You don't mean to say you want a drop?" asked her uncle.

"Yes, I do," was the answer.

The General called for a fresh supply. "You're a jolly old boy, Rose," quoth he, looking lovingly upon her; "and now I've before me a jack-ass and a she——shall I go on?"

"No; to be called 'an ass' *twice* within a fortnight makes one feel uncomfortable."

"Who else dared——" began the old man, with a flash of the soldier in his eye.

"O, it's nothing—nothing," interrupted Rose, laughing heartily; "only, my two uncles have both paid me the same compliment."

"Did that sneering doctor dare ——"

"O, he says all sorts of things, you know. I don't care what he says any more than I do what you say—ah, not half so much!" added the warm-hearted girl, as, rising from the straw, she threw her arms round the old man's neck; "and, besides, I never did look upon him as an uncle. I can hardly fancy he's dear Aunt Rachel's husband—he's so cold and austere."

"You don't like him, then, any better. Well, I've never seen much of him, and I don't want to see any more," observed the General.

"Oh, you must not say that, dear uncle. He is very different to you; he never would be a jovial, happy man in any position of life; he thinks too much of its sterner, darker side; but he is not without good qualities, and if he would only shew them a little more, he would be more loved; but

some people, I think, wear veils over their hearts: he does, I'm sure."

"Perhaps, my girl, after all, those people may be better suited to the world."

"I don't know; come what may, I will never veil one feeling of mine, good, bad, or indifferent."

"Then I fear you will make enemies; because, all those whose affections are strong have other points of disposition equally so."

"Well, I don't care, if I never lose the dear good friends I've got."

"Well, old boy, I should say it would be your own fault if you did. But come along," continued the General; "we were to be at Morley Court to lunch; it is past twelve now."

And so they set off towards the old Court at a quick pace.

Just as Miss Lindsay and her uncle passed the boundary of Teevesdale, they were met by Gertrude Morley. Now, Rose had not seen her since her own arrival at the Park, Gertrude having been on a visit at the De

Vere's. The young lady, who seemed in high spirits, informed her auditors that she had arrived home the day before, accompanied by the Lady Emily; and added, with a vivid blush, that Roland de Vere was expected down from London that day. She also acquainted them with what was to Rose much more pleasing intelligence, that "Mamma had had such a nice long letter from Ernest—that both he and Ralph were well, and were now at Paris—that, after leaving America, they had gone to Antwerp, because Ernest wished Ralph to see all he could—that they had been delighted with the pictures there," &c.

Now, Rose was anything but pleased at the arrival of the Lady Emily, not only because she did not much relish the thought of an interview, but she knew that, had Lady Morley been alone, she would have confided to her all the particulars of her son's letter, and she fondly imagined that it might contain a little message or sentence regarding herself.

Lady Emily de Vere was anything but a "Lady," in appearance, (as Nature had formed her); but fine feathers make fine birds, and she had a good milliner and dressmaker. She was largely made—had coarse features and a coarse skin; perhaps the knowledge of these facts made her consider affectation a necessary appendage to her exalted rank. She spoke in a very low tone, not much above a whisper, with a long drawl.

"What a fool!" whispered General Lindsay to his niece, after her ladyship had entered, for a few minutes, the room where they were seated with Sir Edward and Lady Morley.

Rose inwardly coincided with this opinion. Indeed, she felt to have taken a very great dislike to the Lady Emily, and was taxing herself with illiberality, not seeing clearly the reason why she did so (perhaps the reader can enlighten her). They had been talking of the travellers, and Rose's cheek was a little flushed in consequence. She

was much amused in watching the very courteous attention paid by Sir Edward, in his grandest manner, to the Lady de Vere, and also to mark the fulsome caresses lavished by Gertrude on her "dearest friend."

"One," thought the observer, "is trying to hook the lady for his son; and the other, the brother for herself—quite a little game of life."

But another, besides Miss Lindsay, noticed Sir Edward; and it did not escape *her* scrutiny how differently and with what *real* admiration he looked upon Rose. His homage to Lady Emily was performed with much stateliness (it was part of his nature to be stately); but when he addressed Rose (which, however, he appeared to endeavour not to do on this occasion), he seemed to cast aside his proud bearing, and to drop into the natural man. He was more natural with Rose and her uncle than with any other beings on earth.

She who noted the above facts was Lady Morley. Rose was her great favourite; and as the young girl sat there, with her truth-

ful, blooming countenance, her ladyship did not feel with her spouse, who had said, "Fascinating as she is, her charms seem to sink into insignificance when we consider the nature of her ancestry." If Rose had been penniless, instead of the heiress of Teevesdale Park, she would have been an equal favourite with Lady Morley.

Now, that tiresome old General, out of pure mischief, began relating how Rose had sat on the straw in the stable and drank porter that morning.

"Will you be quiet, uncle?" cried Rose, colouring a little at the general exclamation.

"D-e-a-r m-e!" said Lady Emily, trying to look contemptuously at Miss Lindsay. It was but a trial, however; she could not meet that steadfast, dignified glance which Rose thrust from her large bright eyes into her little pale meaningless ones.

"Lor' bless me! your ladyship should have seen her there!—she looked as graceful on the straw as any queen on her throne," said the General, enthusiastically.

"Will you be quiet, uncle?" repeated Miss Lindsay, giving the old gentleman a pinch this time, but to no effect; he was off on his rattling strain, and was determined to astonish "that starchy girl opposite," as he afterwards confessed.

"I cannot understand a queen drinking porter," remarked Sir Edward, blandly, "although Miss Lindsay would look well doing anything, I daresay."

"Not understand the queen drinking porter! Bless her little heart! I'll be bound she'd enjoy a little bottle of Guinness's double, or she's no mother, nor no woman either. Why, all women like what's good: there's not half the number of cadaverous teetotallers among them as in the other sex. Why, Rosey, she'd drink a gallon!—only ——"

"*Will you be quiet, uncle?*"

"Only it doesn't always agree with her. I'm afraid that 'll upset her to-day—she's had a pretty long pull ——"

"Uncle!" Here Miss Lindsay's patience was exhausted, and she gave her uncle a

good slap on his substantial back. Even Lady Emily laughed, and they were all merry, and that's what the cheery old veteran wanted.

But it is a strange world, and merriment and sadness often closely follow one another. A letter, bearing a foreign post-mark, was handed to Sir Edward Morley, acquainting him with the death of a nephew, who had fallen in India. Although only connected by marriage to Sir Edward, the news threw a damp upon the spirits of all assembled, and the conversation naturally turned upon the terrible state of affairs in that country, where deeds of outrage and murder were then hourly perpetrated. Lady Morley raised her eyes to heaven, and her heart also, as she thanked God with fervour that her own dear son was in safety, far away from these barbarities; and there was one other there whose heart also responded, although her lips were silent.

"Were I a few years younger, nothing should keep me here," observed the General.

"Then thank God you are so old," said Rose.

"Ernest would have gone long ago, only mamma begged and prayed him not to go, and papa, too—didn't you, papa?" said Gertrude.

"Yes, child; it is hard, even in such a cause, to lose a much beloved and only son."

"Well, now, you come home with us," said General Lindsay, turning to the baronet, "and we'll make you throw off that long face. You can't bring the poor boy back to life, you know; and if you could, I don't know whether he'd thank you for the interference now."

"My kind friend," was the reply, "I should have liked it beyond all things, for this news has made me very depressed, and, as you say, it can do no good; but I expect Mr. Roland de Vere here this afternoon."

Rose looked at Gertrude, who blushed as before at the mention of that gentleman's name, and put her arm round the Lady Emily's waist.

"I'm very glad to get into the air," was

the old General's remark as they wended their way homewards. "That girl made me feel cold; surely young Morley won't marry such a thing as that!"

"Some people would call her a fine woman, you know, uncle," observed his niece, with an arch smile.

"She's a mighty *big* one, if you mean that, and got up like a peacock."

It was about two hours after Rose and her uncle had returned from Morley Court; the former had been engaged with some callers in the drawing-room, and finding that the General had not made his appearance there, she concluded that he had gone down to the farm, or perhaps to see how the donkey was after his morning's debauch. So, although the wind whistled very drearily, and it was getting dusk, she thought, as it wanted nearly an hour till dinner-time, she would put a large shawl over her shoulders, and go and seek him. She had proceeded about a quarter of a mile in the direction of the farm, when she stopped to pin her shawl over her

chest, for the wind came in gusts and blew it from her. She could not help thinking, as she stood for a moment with her back to Boreas, how sad the first aspect of winter was. The autumn had been late that year, and only a fortnight before, when she had walked down that path, the foliage on either side was full, and the air genial; now the leaves were driven by her in myriads, and, in spite of all the gardener's care, the place was strewed with them, and looked like an "old discarded friend." Miss Lindsay fancied she smelt tobacco, and she was right, for sure enough, a little way off, in an old summer-house, nearly concealed by shrubs, sat the object of her search, smoking his meerschaum. She started with surprise on first perceiving him, it was so unusual to see the General smoking so shortly before his dinner, and still more so to find him courting seclusion.

"Why, uncle, what are you thinking about?" she exclaimed. He had not seen her till she spoke, and she noticed how ab-

sorbed in thought he looked, another equally unusual circumstance with him. (It was the same expression of anxiety we observed flit over his countenance in the morning when we watched him standing by his gate.)

"Thinking about? Ah! you may well ask. I suppose you think old Uncle Lindsay never thinks, eh?"

"I have often heard him say it's bad for people to think," answered Rose, laughing.

"So it is; there's no use in it. It only makes one's heart shiver—feel an old wound bleed again, eh? I wonder how the ass is; he's not troubled much that way—his wounds don't revive again. Ha! ha!"

Now, although the old man laughed, and tried to use his wonted badinage, he could not disguise from his clear-sighted niece that something troubled him, and so she sat down beside him, and drew his thick hand between her two slender ones and kissed it, which little silent motion caused the General to remove his meerschaum from his mouth, and to return the salute upon her cheek.

"Have you been sitting here long, uncle?" she asked, presently.

"Yes, some time, old boy."

"What *have* you been thinking about?"

"You're a regular woman, Rosey—bump of curiosity, eh?"

"I don't want to know, if you don't want to tell me, dear uncle; only, though it is dusky, I could see, before I spoke, that you looked as if something worried you. Has anything gone wrong?"

"Something is going on wrong at all times and seasons, Rosey; but I think I am an old fool to-night. You were not with me last autumn, and the year before you did not take such keen notice as you do now; you were younger, or you would have seen, I daresay, that I am always a little more thoughtful just about this time; but it's tom-foolery to give way to *thinking*. It was that beautiful occupation, I suppose, caused the dream I had last night," and Uncle Lindsay gave an involuntary sigh.

"But what makes you thoughtful at this

time of year? and what was the dream about?"

"Two questions at once—another fragment of your sex."

"Oh, never mind my sex! do tell me about the dream. I thought you always made such game of dreams, uncle!"

"So I do, girl; and I ought, perhaps, to make game of this; but I can't." And there was a slight tremour in the old General's voice.

"Was it about something that happened, then, long ago? What did you see?"

"I saw a face—a sweet, happy, little face, with golden hair and laughing eyes."

"Oh, uncle! and haven't you seen it in reality, then, for a long, long while?"

There was a pause. Rose was sorry she had asked that last question, for fear it might have been the face of his own child, long dead, that her uncle had seen in his sleep; but then she remembered her mother saying that he had never had any family, and that his wife had lived with him only for a time.

As these thoughts flashed across her mind, she longed to ask the General some particulars regarding his married life, and how it was his wife did not live with him till she died; "but perhaps she is not dead after all," was her reflection, "and it might have been her face he had seen."

It takes much longer to pen thoughts on paper than to coin them in the brain; and Rose asked again, suddenly, "Is it so very long since you saw it, uncle?"

"I never saw it in my life,—would to God I had!"

"Never saw it, dear uncle! Was it a woman's face, then, or what?"

"The face was that of a little child. I have often dreamt of the same before, and with reason, as you shall hear; but it never appeared to me so plainly as it did last night." The General paused again, and Rose was silent. "Now, I think we had better go in, or else my lassy will catch

cold. I've just finished my pipe, and I'm much obliged to it; it's a good friend, sometimes—a comforter,—and so is my Rose."

"But I want to hear all about it, uncle; and I'm not cold at all."

"No, no, nct now,—we'll get in and have our dinner, and a bottle of old port; we shall be quite alone to-night, you know, and then I shall feel better able to go back to early years."

It was nearly dark. Rose could not see her uncle's face, but she heard how his voice faltered, and duly thought there must be something very sad in the recollection of those early years, to have such an effect upon a spirit usually so gay.

"Just tell me one thing," she whispered, clinging to him fondly, "Was it your *own* child?"

"It was," he answered, in the same tone.

"And *you have never seen her!* Is she dead?"

"To the best of my belief, she is dead,—if living, she is the same as dead to me."

"Because you have never seen her—you of course would not know her,—but her name? Is she older than I am?"

"I tell you I cannot answer any more questions now. If living, she would be double your age; but there are no means of discovery. I have long lost all clue, and for many many years I have believed her dead; but such is the strange yearning of a parent's heart, that a foolish dream, or vision if you will, makes it bound with a wild rapture, and convinces me that were the object of its solicitude found to be deformed, blind, or dumb,—ay, even branded with shame and dishonour, the bond of Nature would remain the same. But all this is useless,—ridiculous! Rosey, I am either half mad, or drunk, and am certainly a truer ass than that old fellow in the stable. Come along, old boy! Why, you're shaking with the cold. What a confounded fool I've been."

Miss Lindsay was shaking, but not with cold. She laid her little trembling hand on her uncle's arm, who drew her closer to him, and they walked in silence to the house.

CHAPTER IV.

"Some say,—
'Tis best to face Life bravely—for a part
Will gall us.'——Peace proclaimed
By a good conscience and a merry heart,
Some say,—'Tis Heaven gained!'"

. . . . . .

"Pass me the goblet! for to my old eyes hasten
Full drops of emotion, but I must check their flow,—
Pour out the red wine, for I fain would chasten
Those yearnings of affection—links of 'Long Ago.'"

It was past seven o'clock. At Teevesdale, in that most comfortable of all dining parlours, sat the General and Rose Lindsay. The serving-men had relieved the table of its ponderous burthen of silver dishes and goodly fare, leaving its ebony board polished like a mirror to reflect the dessert service of old Indian china, (a gem in itself,) and the glass, brilliant as crystal, (for the master, easy-tempered as he might be in some

respects, was mighty particular in these). Among the latter article, we must not omit to note the two old-fashioned queer cut decanters, very old friends of the General, and, looking like him, "brimful of hospitality." From one of these he now poured his second glass of favourite port, and drawing his high-backed chair closer to the ample hearth, where the huge logs, piled one upon another, seemed to threaten invasion to the chimney, he leant back, and gave himself up to meditation.

Rose waited patiently. To her surprise, during dinner he had regained not only his composure, but his joviality, and had cracked jokes which had made her laugh till her eyes watered. Now, that all was quiet, the clatter of plates and dishes over, and silence broken only by the hissing wood and glowing blaze, the old man resigned his wonted mirth, and appeared to be studying the task he had before him; to be retracing a road he had trodden years ago, and once again encountering its dangers and diffi-

culties. Perhaps he was pondering how to begin the performance of his promise, how to open the relation of a tale long passed.

Miss Lindsay looked upon her uncle's countenance with reverence, almost amounting to awe. She had never seen it wear that expression before; there was something in it new and undefined. She, too, had left her seat at the table, and as her slender figure reclined in a *fauteuil*, with her little foot resting on the fender, truly there could be seldom found a more interesting-looking creature. Her low boddice displayed her finely moulded bust, and white skin; and her dark glossy hair, banded, (*en rôle*,) was brought in a plait around her head, forming a coronet to one by nature queen-like. Her unstudied attitude was grace itself; and in her eyes, now fixed upon the blaze, there was deep reflection and heart-felt sympathy. They looked like two diamonds, so bright they were; probably with those tears of laughter she had shed.

Although a certain delicacy pervaded her

whole form and bearing, there was that in Rose Lindsay which gave one the idea that a long path in life was marked out before her,—a path replete with love, and not exempt from suffering. Where is the heart that loved and never suffered? The more sensitive our nature, the more akin are we to human woe. The more we lean upon an arm of flesh, the greater will our trials be, and the harder our struggles to endure. Yet the sweet harmony of mind with mind, —the sweet sense of strength from the support of another, though dearly bought, is undoubtedly earth's greatest consolation; and those who do not covet such, are hardly to be envied. But the sympathy of human love was bound up in Rose Lindsay's being; and, as we said, shone forth in her dark truthful eyes, where a keen observer might almost trace the germ of future maternity, and view from thence the gushing well-spring of affection,—ay, verily she looked what God had made her, a "woman loving, and to be loved."

The clock upon the mantelshelf chimed the half-hour, and still the old man was silent. Rose looked into his face wistfully. It was a pretty picture, and we scarcely like to leave it; that cosy room with its crimson flock-paper, its ruddy grate, and those two seated there, different in sex and age—one in the last stage of his life's journey, the other but commencing hers—so widely different, and yet a strange similitude existing between them. At length Uncle Lindsay raises his eyes from the crackling wood and meets those of his niece,—

"Getting impatient, old boy?"

"Well, dear uncle, I am very anxious to hear about what you told me, if it will not pain you," Rose replies.

"It's soon told, Rosey—soon told; only, like the children say at school, it's difficult to begin; but here goes." And the old General drained his glass, and drew still nearer the fire, as if to imbibe courage from its cheery glow.

"You've often heard me speak of poor Linder, haven't you?"

"Not very often, uncle; but I remember your telling me that your name was put down, instead of his, among the fallen at the battle of Waterloo."

"After the battle, Rosey—yes, on the dead list; but we're a long way before that. It's just fifty years next spring since I first saw him, poor fellow—and a brave good man he was—travelling in the most beautiful part of that beautiful and romantic country, Ireland, with his young bride; his heart full of hope and joy, he first chained my everlasting friendship. I thought his nature perfect, and took my standard from it." Pausing for a few moments, the General again proceeded. "And while he lived, thank God, he had no cause for care—no cause to darken his joyous brow or sadden his joy-lit eye. In a county south of the Shannon, in most attractive mountain scenery, is situated the village of Woodford, which contained their dwelling;

and many, many a happy day and peaceful nightfall have I passed in it. His wife's name was Emilia, and a sprightly bewitching thing she was; but ere two years had passed from our first acquaintance, they took me to see a thing far more bewitching still."

Again the speaker paused, and Rose, to help him, asked,—

"I suppose your future wife."

"Ay, Rose, my future wife. At that time, my girl, we held Frenchmen in the same contempt that we now do Sepoys."

"Oh, uncle, but they didn't do such dreadful things?"

"No, child, they did not; we held them in the same contempt, but not with the same bitter hatred and vengeance; but any trick a John Bull could have played a Frenchman he would have gloried in then. But you must understand, Rosey, as I've told you before, that I don't think the Almighty meant me for a soldier. I love all things—everybody; I swear allegiance to 'universal love'—I did at seventeen, and, therefore,

with shame to me be it spoken, that many a time when I could have shot a Frenchman I didn't."

"But what has all this got to do with the lady?" asked Rose.

"Simply that both she and Mrs. Linder, who were both sisters, were partly of French extraction (French and Irish), and the sister whom we went to see was being educated in the convent of St. Cloud, in the south of France."

"Her name, uncle?"

"Clare—Ella Clare."

"And Mrs. Linder's name, before marriage, was Clare too, of course?"

"Yes, Emilia Clare. There was a strange legend attached to that family's history, wherein it was said some knight had sworn that all female descendants of the name of Clare should be given Christian names beginning with the letter 'E.' The romance, for such I deem it, I have heard, but it is too long to relate now; suffice it to say, the superstition inherited by their Irish blood, had prompted

them to obey for many generations the defunct knight's mandate, and, accordingly, all the little girl-children had pretty, soft appellations. Emilia and Ella were orphans, both beautiful and rich; Emilia being the elder, was the wealthier, but not the most lovely (at least, in my eyes), although she was a sweet tender creature. But Ella, oh, Rosey! she would make a man's heart leap right into his mouth at first sight of her. I never saw her moody; her equal in gaiety, I never met with; she was the most lightsome, decoying, fascinating being you can imagine —at least, I thought so then. I don't know whether one changes with the times, but that dolorous manner assumed by certain young ladies of the present day may have a peculiar charm which I couldn't understand then. Well she took nothing to heart till the day of her death, winsome wee thing!"

Rose began to question, in her heart, whether she should have liked this peculiarity in Miss Ella Clare, but she merely observed,—

"Well, uncle, and so you married her?"

"And so I married her, old boy; but you're in a great hurry. When Ella left the convent she went home. Now the home of both sisters, until they married, was Meerdvale, the seat of their uncle, Colonel Clare—an old stern man, not a favourite of mine, but more bearable than his eldest son, Reginald, who was about the most conceited puppy I ever knew, and, I was going to say, the most ill-principled." The old General's eye flashed, and his niece gazed in wonder, for it was not often that it kindled with anger. "It appeared, from what I afterwards learnt, that he had liked his cousin Ella from childhood; that they had at the ages of twelve and ten years plighted their infant vows. Now, when I first saw her fairy face at St. Cloud, I was much struck with it; and, although I thought it a little coquettish in her to send by me a message to her cousin Reginald, about some bauble he had given her, I was nevertheless flattered by the great attention she showed me, and her flattering speeches."

Rose was here forced to turn her head in order to conceal a smile at the old man's artlessness.

"Well, I didn't see her for a long while after that; not, indeed, until I returned from the West Indies. Ireland was now in agitation from one extremity to the other. I went to Meerdvale; drank anew the draft of nectar she held to my lips. I watched her and Reginald quarrel and make it up like two children, which, indeed, they were, and thought that being brought up together in infancy, they had naturally become in feeling like brother and sister. Early one morning the detached companies of the 28th marched from Woodford for head-quarters. There was not a more splendid regiment—a finer body of men in existence. With others, it was ordered to the coast for embarkation; and veterans who had served together in the Peninsular war, met on the road to shake hands and hail each other once again. I left Ella in the pretty cottage of the Linders; in the deep glen

sheltered by the mountains, whose streams uniting form a river, flowing with a sweet refreshing sound; a more picturesque spot cannot be imagined. She had been my wife about ten months."

"But, uncle, you have left out all about your wedding!"

There was something in the words and tone of this remark that tickled the old gentleman's fancy, and he laughed heartily, while he wiped his eyes twice; then pouring a bumper from the benevolent decanter, he drained it, and said, "It's no use, Rosey, going into particulars; you know what a wedding is; I can't go over that part; of course, I thought myself the happiest fellow in the world, and all that"—here the pocket-handkerchief was in requisition; and Rose, annoyed at her indiscrimination, said, "Go on, dear uncle; I'm very foolish to interrupt you, only I wanted to know how that cousin Reginald bore the loss of Ella."

"Why, he wouldn't be at the wedding, of course, and the old man declined very

politely; it seemed they wanted her money, for the estate was terribly encumbered—so I heard afterwards; but you must let me go on my own way, and not make me dwell on things best forgotten. I NEVER SAW MY WIFE AGAIN. I will not enter into details of all that ensued after my departure from that happy valley: of the scenes of violence and bloodshed to which I was eye-witness—events of anguish, which make one shudder to recall. You have heard me speak of the battle-field: I was told I fought bravely; if I did, it was with my eyes shut—if not literally, physically, and with the rash impetuosity of a madman; there are some, perhaps, who might call me a coward, but I never was one—they mistake the feeling altogether, and do not understand my creed—but I am wandering from the subject. The largest army France ever embattled was defeated; panic-struck, they resisted, but feebly, unable to stand the terror of the charge—the *fatal* order of our great commander—they broke and fled, and the car-

nage that ensued was awful. When the sun rose after the battle, the scene exhibited was too frightful for humanity: the dead lay in thousands, but their agony was over. The piteous moans of the multitude of mutilated wretches, tortured by their wounds and the pangs of thirst, was heart-rending; but I, thank God, saw them not, nor heard their distracting cries: my God had mercifully taken my senses from me, and I lay on that crimson field inanimate, and, to all appearance, lifeless. The great road to Brussels was so cut up and choked with dead horses and baggage, that the carriages for the wounded were retarded, and all relief much impeded. Some miserable creatures managed to reach the city in the last struggles of nature; others, and among them poor Linder, perished on the road-side, and a pit, rudely dug, received his body—God bless his memory!"

"Poor fellow!" ejaculated Rose.

"On that part of ground most cumbered with the dead, I lay, deep in mud and gore.

Some Belgian peasants discovered there was yet life within me, and carried me away to their humble home, where I lay for five months despaired of, but well nurtured and cared for by my kind protectors.

"One cold but fine morning, I bade them adieu, and set off for Brussels, intending, as fast as my strength would permit, to hurry on my way homewards. I had sat down in the hotel to write a few lines to Ella, for whose feelings of doubt and suspense I entertained the greatest anxiety. Finding my hand shake so much from weakness that it was impossible to hold my pen, I rang the bell and ordered some wine. The waiter, on his return, told me that a gentleman who had seen me enter the courtyard desired to see me. An old Frenchman was admitted, whom I remembered to have seen at Meerdvale. He raised his hands and shrugging his shoulders in the true French style, exclaimed, in such vehement accents, '*Mon Dieu!*' that for a moment his breath seemed suspended. Thinking his astonishment was occasioned

only by seeing me alive, I began asking numerous questions, and assuring him that I was in a fair way towards recovery. He then chattered a lot of French stuff, which I never *could* well understand, and with his gestures and grimaces was altogether so unintelligible, that I began to fear that either he had lost his senses, or that something had transpired at home of an alarming nature. When I had reduced him to something like order, having pushed him into a chair, and poured him out a glass of wine, I enquired, 'What is the matter?—is my wife ill, or anything wrong, or are you so surprised at seeing me alive?' His mute manner had returned, and he stared at me till I thought his eyes would roll from his head. At length, seeing my impatience, he said, in broken English, 'Me ver' surpris'—all de peuple ver' surpris'; in de paper you are DEAD!' His manner had become so solemn, that I could not resist a smile, as I replied, 'Well, never mind; mistakes will happen.' 'Mistakes do happen,' he echoed; 'Madame

is ——" 'What?' cried I. '*Married long time to Monsieur Reginald Clare*!' "

"Oh, uncle!" gasped Rose.

"Yes, they had been married three months; the old man was dead, and she was mistress of Meerdvale."

"What ever did you do?"

"What do you think I did, Rosey?" asked the General, poking the fire, and then leaning back in his chair, as if relieved of a load.

"Oh! I can't tell; why, you are actually laughing, uncle!"

"Well, so I did then; I was taken aback the first minute, rather, and then I laughed till I was forced to hold my sides, joined at last heartily by the little Frenchman."

"Oh! how *could* you? It seems so dreadful—*awful* for *her*; she surely might have waited a little longer."

"She might have waited, certainly; but now the thing was done, what would have been the use of revealing to her her *mistake*, as the Frenchman called it? He kept sacredly,

to the day of his death, the vow he made to keep his knowledge of my existence a *profound secret.* She never knew the error she had committed, if error it was. In my opinion, it existed in her marrying me at all, poor little cheery soul! But there! she was happy—that was enough for me. What would have been the use of darkening her young life to satisfy my own? If I had cast a shadow over her lot, how much the happier would mine have been, or hers, either? for it might have changed her fate in this world and in the world to which she has gone. Who knows? You seemed surprised at my mirth, Rosey; but really there was something comical in being told that I was dead, and my wife married to another man. Mirth, though, would hardly have arisen, and I don't know whether I should have borne these tidings in the same way, had he told me the last part of his news *first;* but, to do the little fellow justice, I must say he joined as heartily in my sorrow as in my mirth."

The General closed his eyes and shivered;

and Rose, guessing the point to which his narrative had arrived, said, "I know what is coming, but don't talk about it if it pains you: he told you you were a father."

"He did, dear Rosey. Ah! *Ella's child and mine!*" His lips quivered, and his hand shook nervously. Rose jumped up and threw her arms round the old man; her tears fell upon his head, which lay upon her white bosom, and he sobbed like a child. And there's many a young man who reads this book, would have envied General Lindsay's position at that moment.

"Now, old boy, we'll drop this for ever."

"Yes, dear uncle, we had better; as you say, there's no use in dwelling upon the past. And undoubtedly you acted rightly, but at a great sacrifice to the strongest feelings of nature. Tell me one thing—how did you hear your child was dead?"

"The Frenchman, Dubois, lived for upwards of seven years after that event. He kept a watch for me over that little talisman of my heart, and told me from time to time

how beautiful she grew. He described her with the long golden hair and gladsome eyes I saw so plainly in my dream. When he died I went to India, more alarmed than ever lest my existence should become known. I had heard that the child was idolized by Ella; she never had another; her own Christian name was given to it, and it also bore that of Clare. Some years after, a soldier's wife, who came from the south of Ireland, informed me of the death of Ella; she also stated that Reginald Clare had been dead three years: some said he poisoned himself, owing to the desperate state of his affairs. I hastened to England; the estate was sold, and all traces of the Clare family appeared lost. I made endless inquiries for my child; I could gain no clue, nor obtain the slightest information regarding her. Like one frantic, I flew hither and thither. Many years passed, and once again, in Brussels, I found an old servant of the family, who told me that my poor child had taken her mother's death so much to heart, that a long illness

was the consequence of her grief. After the funeral she had gone to live in an Irish family as a kind of companion or humble confidant—a family, from what I could gather from the woman, most bigoted to all the delusions of their fanatic faith. She had forgotten the name, but she added that it was unlikely, from what she had understood, that the young lady could have recovered, and that even if she had, she feared her life had not been an enviable one. So, you see, I have had reason almost to hope that the Almighty took her. And yet the thought is always harrowing, that *I have never seen my child.* But come, let us have some coffee, and you, old boy, get 'My Novel,' and give us a bit of Bulwer; his high-souled eloquence will soon drown reflection and banish bitterness."

"That it will! If he was here you should get up a bottle of your oldest port, that in the fourth bin. Ah! you see *I know*, you dear old child!" And Rose, taking the old

General's head between her hands, kissed his forehead lovingly.

"Where did we leave off?—let's see, the second chapter of the second volume. Why, his vigorous intellect must make the old feel young again. I love him."

"You little booby," said the old man, smiling fondly, "why, you have never even seen him!"

"What has that to do with it? Don't you think I know him just as well as if I had been with him for years? Ah! I know him a great deal better than many that I *have* seen."

"I'm not quite so sure," said the General. And the reading began.

Now that night Miss Lindsay had the nightmare, or some such hideous thing, for she woke so startled and nervous that she felt even afraid to look out of bed at the expiring night-light; a disagreeable sensation of undefined fear was upon her, which is frequently experienced at such times. She grew angry with herself, as the tremor lasted,

and in a most determined manner sat up and looked about her. Perhaps it was owing to her mind having been over-excited by the anecdote of the past evening that she had had a dream which, as the poet says, "was not at all a dream," but rather a vision of Eve Ending being bound on an altar of frosted silver, with silver leaves drooping on either side, her long hair almost covering her form, and over the altar a halo shone, with these words written in letters of gold, "Faith, Patience, Long-suffering." Now, whether there is any mysterious link in dreams between things real or ideal, we know not; some people scoff at the idea, while a great man has said—

> "For there are spirits all scenes that scan,
> And whisper them to the soul of man."

How that may be, we cannot decide; but certain it is, that poor Eve had been that day in great tribulation, and just at that selfsame hour was sobbing herself to sleep. Her grievance was as follows:—

When Miss Lindsay was last stopping at

Sea View she fulfilled the Doctor's prophecy, and did actually begin to *write a book;* the fact was known only to Eve, and indeed was partly caused by her persuasion. It was agreed between the two girls that not another soul on earth should be enlightened until the work was in a fair way to completion. So Rose began scribbling away in Eve's cosy room for hours, day after day, upon a sheet of foolscap with a pencil, and Eve undertook to write the same neatly in ink in copy-books ready for the press, greatly against the inclination of the former, who considered the task too much for the invalid; but Eve had her own way. When well enough, there was nothing she enjoyed more than writing, and she copied the manuscript with all the care of a school-girl over her first holiday letter. Now that afternoon she had been very busy, and had completed Rose's third chapter; but she had rather overtaxed her strength, and had lain down quite exhausted when she had finished. Fatigue had made her forget to lock her desk as usual, and good

Aunt Thornton coming in while she slept, naturally perused part of the copy-book, saw at once the meaning of the affair ("A Spell," by Rose Lindsay), and innocently enough asked the Doctor at dinner if he did not think so much writing bad for Eve, acquainting him at the same time of the great talent of her dear niece, Miss Lindsay. The Doctor stormed, and loudly declared he would have no such nonsense as a novel written in his house, and gave it as his opinion that there should be a law against people fooling away their time in such a manner. To this speech Eve listened patiently, although her cheek flushed and then turned very white; but she only blamed herself for leaving her desk unlocked—she did not blame Aunt Thornton, who had spoken for her good, nor yet the Doctor for what he had said, well knowing his hatred of novels. She sat calmly, and called to mind the discussion she had had with Rose.

"I would not call it a *novel*," she had said.

"Why not?" asked Rose.

"Because you know how many people dislike the name of *novel*—will not read them. Besides, uncle, to whom I know you think I allude, by your smile, there is Aunt Maria, Mr. Mainard, oh! several I could name. There is that clever lady, Mrs.——I forget her name, on Bury Green, who looks upon novels merely as trash, and will never read one."

"Do you know how much I put upon the opinion of such people as those you have named?" enquired Miss Lindsay, coolly.

"No," said Eve.

"Just this." And the would-be authoress snapped her finger with the greatest disdain. "Rely upon it, Eve, that all those people who scorn fiction have not minds capacious enough to profit by it. Fiction is a grand thing if rightly used; but they are so taken up with their own little ideas, the very narrow world around them, that they cannot look beyond it. If characters are well por-

trayed, we may learn much by the supposed trials and sufferings and fortitude of our fellow-creatures. And I should say that there has rarely been a novel written but what some part of it has been taken from life."

And so the matter was settled, and the scribbled sheets left in Eve's charge. While she sat quietly pondering over the above, the Doctor left the table, and soon after they heard him quit the house. Mrs. Thornton remarked that he had gone down to the village.

Eve had a game of draughts with her aunt, and it was not till she retired to rest, about half-past nine (for she was very tired) that she discovered what the Doctor had done. Joan's eyes looked rather red when she unfastened her young lady's dress, which Eve noticed, and then the old servant burst into tears and told her how her master had come up and desired to see Miss Ending's desk; how she (Joan) had tried to prevent him,

knowing it was unlocked, but he discovered it on the side table, and opening it had torn up all Miss Lindsay's papers, with the copy-book in which Eve had been writing with such care. This was too much for the poor girl, and she drooped her head and burst into tears. Joan endeavoured to console her, but to no effect, and her emotion getting beyond control, a violent attack of hysterics was the result of the Doctor's performance.

Aunt Thornton was much terrified, and did not leave Eve till she thought her sound asleep; but sleep was very far from Eve's eyes; they were closed it is true, and Mrs. Thornton went down to see if her husband had returned, and to relate, with dismay, what had taken place. He did not appear to pay much heed to her recital, and merely said, "What d——d nonsense."

Eve lay in a kind of mental agony; it was the first time in her life she had permitted herself to blame her uncle, and she did

blame him much; and then blamed herself for blaming him, considering she was guilty of a great crime. At last sleep did come and eased her poor little breast. What the Doctor felt of course no one knew, but it is certain, that before entering his own room that night, he went into Eve's, and, bending over her, imprinted a kiss on her pure brow. She was unconscious of the act; if she had not been she would never have forgiven herself for censuring him as she had done that day. He walked, candle in hand, to her desk; it was still open, and a written paper, another small manuscript of Miss Lindsay's, lay upon it. He read it, but this time he left what he read unmolested:—

Cast thou away such prejudice: 'tis vain
  To scorn the heaven-born gift thou may'st not share:
Grudge not poor homage to creative brain,
  Where shines the bright light God has kindled there,
Crush not a bud whose trembling leaves may close
  O'er germ of promise—'neath a kindly sky
  To expand—a blossom which shall never die;
More fragrant than the rose!

As he walked along the landing he muttered, "Rubbish;" and then called angrily over the banisters, "John! see those maids are up in the morning."

John called, "Yes, sir," in reply, and blushed a little at what he had to do, although he was shutting the shutters alone in the hall.

"Mind my breakfast's all ready by half-past seven," continued the Doctor, still shouting. "A lazy set of idle beggars!"

"They'll not be so late, my love, to-morrow morning," said gentle Mrs. Thornton, as he entered the bedroom.

"They'd better not, or I'll sack 'em all, every one."

He then undressed and got into bed, but all that night he was very restless, and each time he turned he twitched the bed-clothes so snappishly that poor Aunt Rachel, who could keep awake no longer, began to imagine herself an ill-used person, doomed for life to remain in a thorough draft; and then, that

she had to wander, without garments, in a bleak March wind; and, lastly, that she was being tossed up in the air like a shuttlecock. Good night, reader.

CHAPTER V.

"Those wondrous works of art—by man wrought through his Maker."

It was a fine evening in Paris; the Boulevards presented a brilliant spectacle, with the gay shops, and gaily dressed people all clustering there like moths before the light. Illuminated as a vast theatre, upon its stage paced the actors of many a trying part and intricate scene in life's varied drama. Among them walked, arm in arm, Ernest Morley and Ralph Thornton. They seemed to be enjoying the scene and the hour, for they were discoursing merrily.

"I wish England were more like this," said Ralph; "there seems here something worth living for; some enjoyment—some

zest. It makes one dread returning to the gloom."

"It is very gay and delightful for a time," replied Morley; "but there is something about the peace and quiet of our own land that always makes me yearn for it when I am away."

"In your position I can understand that feeling better; and yet I do not know whether, even in your place, I should feel the desire. In my own it is sheer misery, as you know."

"I cannot call it sheer misery, Ralph; it is certainly trying to have to dwell in scenes distasteful to us, and to have to study what we cannot like."

"Yes, and then think of that wretched, dull Doverton."

"Nay, I have seen that village look beautiful and anything but dull for a country place; but it is evident you are not happy there, Ralph, and I can understand, in a great measure, what you feel. You were speaking the other day of writing to your

uncle about having rooms in London and commencing business as an artist. Why do you not do so? I am sure, with your talent, you would succeed; and I am also sure you have many friends who would help you."

Ralph pressed the arm he held,—"Of your last remark I am quite sure too; not in the number of the friends that I should have, but in the help. I do not fear, either, of succeeding in time. I would take likenesses for the profit at first, otherwise I despise that part of the profession. My forte lies in works of imagination; give me a subject, and I think I could prove my skill."

"I think so too," observed Morley; "you would require models, of course. It is rather an expensive profession, and, I presume, not very remunerative at first. Like all other talents, this has much to do, and, perhaps, to suffer, before it can shine. But I admire your courage, and believe, if you selected good subjects for your paintings, and perse-

vered, you would one day gain what you so much long for—'a great name.'"

"I don't know that I so much long for that," Ralph replied, in rather a mortified tone, "as I do to shake off the shackles of my present life, and be my own free self—able to act according to my own free will; and, above all, to feel my own master."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said Morley, who could not help contrasting Ralph's last speech with one he had made a week ago, wherein fame had seemed all he cared to live for,—"very glad; and I advise you to acquaint the Doctor, very respectfully, of your views and inclination—asking his advice, as all elderly people like that compliment paid them."

Ralph laughed satirically, "Bless you, Ernest! you know nothing of that old fool, or you would talk about the affair very differently. Give me advice, indeed! He'd write back, and tell me to go to the devil."

"I can hardly think that."

"But I *know* he would. No, the only

way to do it would be to stop in London. When I get there—take my rooms, if I can procure them on reasonable terms, and then write, if needs be, when the thing was done and settled. But I don't think I could manage it. I believe I've enough to keep me; but being under age I cannot, I suppose, demand anything more than he chooses to allow me, which would be a mean pittance enough. He might refuse to let me have anything, unless I returned to his protection,—protection—bah! He's been well *paid* for all he's done for me. And then, you know, the rooms that I should like,—at least two good large ones, regularly fitted for an artist, would be more, I'm afraid, than I could afford. I might perhaps get them cheaper towards the East end of London, and move farther West hereafter."

Morley was silent for a few moments; there were various emotions in his breast just then. "You must think well about it, Ralph. I think it would be better to write

first, because you would be awkwardly situated if you took the rooms, and then could not pay for them. I am going to write to my father to-morrow; now you write to your uncle at the same time."

"I write to him! I can't, Morley, I don't know how I should begin, or how I should end."

"Well then, leave it for a few days; we may think of some other plan."

"What a pretty girl!" exclaimed Ralph. "Look! isn't she pretty?"

"Yes, she's pretty; but don't stare at her so; don't look round, Ralph. See, she is coming after us."

"Well, let her come."

"No, no, no; we must have no more of that; I don't want to take you back to England a French *roué*. Look, isn't that splendid?"

Morley drew Ralph to a shop-window, filled with all kinds of jewellery and fancy ware. He went in, under pretext of buying a few little articles for his mother and others at home. Ralph followed, tacitly

obeying his friend. A short time, a *very* short time ago, he would not have brooked such interruption to his will. They remained in the shop above a quarter of an hour. Ralph purchased a handsome cigar-case for Morley, who was pleased to see, when they came out, that his manœuvre had succeeded, and the bright-eyed French lass had shot another glance in an opposite direction. The reason which caused Ralph to submit to guidance he would formerly have spurned, was the fact, that he was beginning *to love his Mentor.*

On their way towards Meurice's Hotel, where they were staying, they spoke of the glories of the Louvre, where they had been that day; and any one to have witnessed the energy of Ralph's manner, to have heard the excited tones in which he dilated upon the grand specimens of Art displayed there, would have doubted if the spirit of ambition was not as strong within him as ever, and certainly would have questioned whether he had quenched his thirst for fame.

The next day was very wet. When the young men met at breakfast, they each expressed their disappointment, for they had agreed the previous evening to start off early for Versailles, and spend some hours there. "Well, it can't be helped," said Morley, as Ralph continued to repine, and to declare "that it was always the way; when one's time was cut out, the weather was sure to change, and hinder one's plans."

"It is tiresome, to be sure, but we have some days yet. This is a regular soaker, and I advise you, Ralph, to get a book, and lose yourself in it, for it doesn't do any good to watch it, and it's regularly set in, depend upon it, for the day."

"What are *you* going to do?" asked Ralph.

"I'm going first to write to my father, and then to see that old man you heard me inquiring about yesterday."

"What that man who lived with you as gardener years ago? What madness, on such a day; it isn't fit for a dog to go out."

"But after you left me, the person told me he was seriously ill. I promised my mother I would go and see him; he was a faithful servant, and lived with us a long time. I should like to be able to tell them at home that I have seen him, which I fear I shall not be able to do, if I don't go soon, from the account I received. Now, to-day is too wet to go out sight-seeing, therefore I will take the opportunity, and try and find him out. I must go first into the Rue Rivoli, for I forget the place those people named. I believe it is some miles from here, therefore, don't expect me back till you see me."

After Morley had gone, Ralph did as he had been advised, and took up a book, in which he had seen his friend deeply interested; he placed himself close to the wood fire, which required constant attention to keep up, much to his disgust. He held the book mechanically for some time, reading a page now and then, and turning over the leaves; but he could not fix his attention

to the subject. His head ached a little, and he began to think whether French living altogether agreed with him.

The rain fell steadily with a monotonous sound against the window. He looked up, and watched it for a few seconds; then, laying the open book upon the table beside him, he gave himself up to a kind of dreamy reverie. He wondered at the different constitutions of people: not only in body, but in mind. However Morley could choose to go out on such a day, merely for the pleasure of seeing an old gardener! Then he pondered for a long while upon the character of his friend, recalling almost every incident that had occurred during their sojourn together; in many instances contrasting his own feelings and conduct with those of him of whom he thought. Sometimes his lip would curl a little, and his eye half close sarcastically; then a general sadness would overspread his features, and unconsciously he would suppress a sigh. Once he murmured, "Ah! then look at *his*

advantages,—he's not screwed down in *purse* or *action*." Then, conscience asked him silently but sternly, "Would *you* have done so, had you had his advantages?" Whether he replied mentally to that still voice or not, we do not know; but this time he sighed very deeply, and had the air of one who has proved himself to disadvantage. "It's no fault of mine,—it's the 'nature of the beast,'" he said aloud, as he arose and walked to the window. A noise in the courtyard below had arrested his meditation.

In spite of the rain, which pattered unceasingly, there were a few idlers lounging about. One man was engaged in oiling the wheels of a cart, while a pert servant-girl passing with her pail, had seemingly out of mischief upset his oil-can; this had roused the man's anger, and a quarrel had ensued, in which the woman appeared to have the best share, for those around, entering into the spirit of the frolic, and perhaps glad of any break to the sombrous hues of the day, had unanimously taken her part against the

greasy stupid-looking *suisse.* "Et voilá la blanchisseuse!" screamed the girl, glad of another ally, as the washerwoman entered the court; "Regardez ce bête grossier!"

The lookers-on crowded round the assailants, and, the affray continuing, the group was soon increased. At length the man, irritated beyond endurance by the jeers of the women and laughter of the spectators, threw his oily rag into the pretty face of his antagonist; and then, as Ralph told Morley afterwards, "the scene was *rich.*" He had seen women in a passion, but never in such a one before; she flew at the offender like a tiger, and then, while he laughed in his turn, she laid into him with all her might, well aided by the vigorous *blanchisseuse.* But, when at last, the two women had exhausted their strength, and the man was allowed to rise from the wet ground, where their united efforts had placed him, the laughter of the bystanders a little subsided; and then the girl, raising her arms aloft, and her eyes towards heaven, began such an appeal, and such

a torrent of abuse as appeared impossible to gush from one pair of lips; so speedily Ralph hastened with his pencil and sketched her; the gestures and energy of the raging Frenchwoman formed "too good a subject" to lose. She had worked herself up into a perfect frenzy, and gave Ralph ample time to get her attitude, &c.; for, regardless of the rain, she did not cease her oration till breath seemed denied her; and then she took up her pail and withdrew into the house. After some muttering among the men, the group dispersed, silence reigned, and Ralph returned to his seat by the fire. After his luncheon, he amused himself by finishing his sketch and putting in others of the group; but, getting tired after a while, he threw down his pencil, and, stretching himself on the sofa, entered once more into reflection.

"What ever makes me so restless," he said to himself. "I can't settle to anything." He began to think that it was because Morley was away—that he had become so used to the society and advice of his friend

that he could not do without them. "And to think that the week after next I shall have to return home—*home!* No home for me!" He bit his lip, walked to the window, and watched the rain still pouring incessantly; he stood there for a few minutes, and then threw himself on the couch again. "Oh, if I could only manage it; but it is impossible! I *cannot* eat humble-pie to that selfish egotist; yet I am under no obligation to him; he has not clothed or fed me; surely I have a right to what is my own. I daresay he has got something out of it all."

How little Ralph Thornton thought that he whom he thus censured had not touched his birthright—had held what his father had bequeathed to him as a sacred thing, leaving it to increase year by year into a goodly store. O Confidence! what mightest thou have done in this case, as in myriads of others? Thou mightest have wrought reverence to the old, and ease of heart and gratitude to the young; thou mightest have knit to-

gether two souls whom thy want had riven for ever asunder! Ralph Thornton never knew his uncle in this life, nor his uncle him. Dwelling under the same roof a lifetime, they were like many another couple in a similar position — strangers and aliens. While Ralph reclined upon the sofa in the dim twilight, his thoughts naturally strayed from one to other inmates of Sea View; one face shone upon his memory like a bright star in a dark sky. Among all those splendid pictures of the Louvre—among all at Antwerp—among all he had gazed upon since his foot had trodden foreign soil, had he seen her equal in angelic purity? "Nay," thought he, "not in the representation of the Holy Virgin herself." Had Titian or Raphael portrayed a countenance so touched by the ethereal grace of what the world calls *Heaven?* "No, never!" he added, aloud. "How ever could *I* have been placed in the same world with *her?*" His eye fell upon the tassel of Morley's smoking cap, and that circumstance turned the train of his thoughts

once more to its wearer, and he inwardly acknowledged that it did not seem so unnatural for the owner of that cap to be in the same world with Eve. Thoroughly discontented with himself, he thus lay until the shades of evening grew deeper, and when the waiter brought the candles, and drew the blinds down, he had fallen into a sound sleep, from whence he was aroused by the dinner-bell. He had dreamt of things long past—of his early boyhood—his earlier childhood. —"Why should the old bough, seared and yellow with time, refuse sympathy with the young sapling?" Why should it be callous to requirements itself once needed? All heedless of the soil which bears the young, weak thing; regardless of the warm sunbeam and refreshing dew. Communion of spirit for which it thirsts and longs!—As with Ralph, the better part of Thornton's nature was all unknown; so with Thornton were Ralph's yearnings and high aspirations; his notions were enigmatical, misunderstood, and consequently condemned. This

misconception, so often direful in its results, is one of humanity's most fatal errors.

At the *table d'hôte* a larger number than usual were assembled; owing to the inclemency of the weather few had gone abroad, and all, as if determined to make up for the *ennui* of the past day, were more than usually vivacious and agreeable; Americans, English, French, and Italians, looked more kindly at each other than they had ever done before. Ralph alone sat dejected and disconsolate, while jokes were cracked and laughter rang around him. He looked moodily at the vacant seat beside him; perhaps he missed the kind voice and cheery smile of its occupant. There was an old lady who was very infirm, who required to be assisted each day to and from her chair, which conveyed her across the yard to her place in the *salle à manger*. Morley had taken upon himself the task of supporting her ever since their arrival at Meurice's. She was already seated when Ralph had made his appearance, but he saw her look wistfully

towards him as he sat down alone. Two young English ladies who were placed nearly opposite to our friends, expressed their disappointment at Mr. Morley's absence in tones loud enough for Ralph to hear.

"He is the most gentlemanly young man that comes here; there's not another to compare with him," said she whom Ralph had observed to take particular notice of Morley's movements.

"He is, certainly; and looks so kind. What a pity his friend is so reserved and cold, for I think he is very handsome."

"Oh, nothing like the other; he doesn't look *good*," remarked the first speaker.

Ralph's cheek flushed, and, although he did not look across the table for some seconds, something in his countenance may have made known to the young ladies that he had overheard their opinion, for, during the remainder of the meal, they conversed in whispers, which annoyed the irritated hearer still more. He was glad when they rose, and, with their father, left the *salle à manger*.

And now there was a little commotion, for the old lady was about to retire; Ralph stepped forward and offered his arm, awkwardly enough, for he thought what a very ugly old lady she was, without having even an air of aristocracy about her, which would have made his position less disagreeable in its publicity, for he felt suddenly brought into general notice—the great attraction of the people at large; and so, with his mind full of compassion for his own situation, and hurrying to get the thing over, he allowed the old lady, whose sight was indifferent, to stumble over a chair, and she, besides nearly falling to the ground herself, pulled him pretty well over too. If it had not been for the timely intervention of those near, Ralph would have turned a somersault over the head of the old lady.

There was a general titter. His position was certainly very ridiculous, for now all eyes were bent upon him, and some with an expression the reverse of polite. Among the latter were those of the lady's servant,

a short thick-set man, who always stood behind her chair, and leered insolently when anybody addressed her. Ralph distinctly heard the fellow mutter "Puppy!" and felt very much inclined to knock him down, which feat might have been easier thought of than accomplished. But his first and great impulse was to rush away; then remembering how differently Morley would have acted in such a plight, he apologized repeatedly for his carelessness to the old lady, who luckily was not much the worse for her tumble, and readily forgave him. He then seated her comfortably in her chair; and perhaps it was her good nature made him consider her less ugly than before. But this occurrence naturally tended to make him more dissatisfied with himself than ever.

"Why should he have made so much of affording a little assistance to the old lady, merely because a set of fools were looking on?" was a question he asked himself, as he went up stairs to the sitting-room. "Morley

never cared for such things; he helped the old lady every day, and thought no more of it than of walking himself down to dinner." As he opened the door he was surprised to see the object of his thoughts standing before the fire, taking off his coat, which appeared to be wet through.

"Why, you're drenched to the skin!" exclaimed Ralph.

"I am, I think, but I shall soon get dry again," said Morley, laughing.

"Why, you've never walked?" asked Ralph, whose countenance brightened at the sight of his friend and the sound of his voice. It was strange to find the pleasure he experienced in the meeting after so few hours' separation; the sensation was a new one to his breast, and he welcomed it undisguisedly.

"I did not mean to walk, I assure you, old fellow," answered Morley, as his bright eye rested upon Ralph with unwonted softness; "but I'll tell you all about it by-and-bye."

"Dear me, how wet you are!" said Ralph, concernedly, as he hastened to take the dripping coat.

"Well, never mind, I've not caught my death, as the old ladies have it. I have told that *garçon* to see that a fire is in my room, and I'll go and 'peel,' as my Oxford chum used to say. You order me up something hot, and something to eat, for I've had nothing all day—there's a good friend. How have you got on?"

"Oh, miserably! But fancy you being drowned like this, through going to see an old stupid gardener!"

"I do not regret going," Morley said, with a changed manner, turning to the fire.

"He has found a *better garden*, far more beautiful than any he formed on earth!"

"Dead?" uttered Ralph, submissively.

"Yes, dead; he died last night; and I'm not sorry that I went," added Morley, as he left the room, "it was a comfort to the poor broken-hearted widow."

Ralph hung the wet coat and the gloves carefully to dry by the fire, which he made up to the best of his ability. He then placed his friend's slippers to warm, and, ringing, told the waiter to take them to Morley's door, and ordered up the required refreshment; he bestirred himself even to put many little things in order about the room; he drew the sofa close to the warm blaze, and pulled the table also nearer. And while he did all this he was unconsciously comparing his friend's day with his own. Poor Ralph! he knew not, then, the "peace which passeth all understanding." Disappointment met him on all sides. His spirit had not sought that fount whose ever-flowing stream administers consolation and courage in the seeking. "Well now, tell me how you came to walk on such a cut-throat day?" said he, as Morley, having dried and refreshed himself, stretched his limbs before the blaze, and declared he felt as comfortable as possible.

"Well, my friend, that is soon told, although on such a day it certainly was an

awkward piece of business. I thought in going that the *voiture* I had taken appeared rather racketty, but never suspected anything the matter with the horse, which took me to the poor widow's at a capital pace. It is a sad out-of-the-way place where poor Robert lived, and we were a long while finding it. I had to send the old cocher back some distance to get some fodder for the poor beast, which was all right during the first three miles of our journey homewards, but then was seized with the staggers and fell down. I thought for some minutes the poor brute was dead."

"How tiresome, to be sure! And you were obliged to turn out in the wet?"

"Of course; but that, although very disagreeable, appeared the least part of the misfortune then; the horse was bad enough, but I never saw a poor fellow so cut up as that old cocher—he literally cried. It seems he has had the horse for many years. I procured assistance after some trouble; and I've promised to go and see the poor old fellow

to-morrow, and should the horse be dead I shall certainly see what I can do to get him another: he's one of the few of that class who deserve a horse. But now," continued Morley, after a pause, during which Ralph remarked he would go also to see the poor man, "tell me what you have been doing and thinking about."

"Well, I don't know that I've done anything. Oh, yes! by the bye." And Ralph produced the sketch of the angry French girl.

His friend was much amused at his recital of the brawl in the courtyard, and laughed heartily when he described how the women battered the suisse. "After all, you've had more amusement than I have—at least, of a much more enjoyable kind. How do you like the book?" asked he.

"Really I don't think I read above a chapter. I don't know what was the matter with me, but I couldn't settle to reading," replied Ralph, colouring.

"You've been thinking, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"About the old subject?"

"Oh, yes! bemoaning my lot."

There was a silence of some moments, during which Morley lit a cigar, and then looked musingly into the fire.

"What are you thinking of?" asked Ralph, who seemed expecting him to speak.

"I was trying to call to mind some beautiful lines, great favourites of my mother's."

"What are they?"

"Well, for you to understand them fully, I must recall, if I can, a little scene of my boyhood. I remember, so well, just such a day as this has been, when I was perhaps about ten years old. I suppose I had done something wrong, for I recollect standing in the inner hall of old Morley Court, and looking out of the large painted window to the east, till I got very wretched and chilly The rain descended in torrents, and all around was gloom; the clouds threw a dark veil over nature. I had looked through one

little bit of square white glass till my eyes ached. I had been doing so almost unconsciously, so much absorbed was my mind in something that had happened to annoy me; but I remember well how the dreary aspect of the earth and sky distressed my vision; and moving a little, I closed my eyes, and bent my head down upon my hands on the broad shelf; when I raised it, a bright piece of yellow glass was before me, through which I gazed as in a dream. The delusion was delightful: there was a golden summer day; and, instead of the dark veil, a bright halo shone over the whole face of nature. I continued to cheat myself thus; not only with regard to the weather, but to fancy myself a young prince in a fairy world, where no trouble came; for the grief of ten years old seemed just then insupportable. I looked, till my eyes refused to look any longer. I expect I had been crying, for I remember they felt hot and swollen; so I once more laid my head down, and tried to go to sleep, that I might carry on my ima-

ginary bliss in a day dream. But the balmy goddess flew from me, and I can almost feel again the pain I gave myself in biting my lip till it bled; just as I had staunched some tears which would flow—whether from the pain or from anger, disappointment or revenge, I cannot say—and had pulled my pocket handkerchief to my lips, without lifting my head, I felt a gentle hand laid upon it. I looked up; it was my mother's. "My son," she said, in tender accents, "how is this?" "*I am so wretched*," I replied, bursting into tears. "Come to my room, and fold my letters for me; be your own good self; forget what is past, it cannot be recalled; do better for the future." I felt my mother's tears fall on my forehead, and I sobbed, "It is such a *miserable day*." "It is, my child, but your misery is in *your heart*. This rain is sent by the good God to nourish the earth which contains our bread; to nourish the soil in which the good seed lies, that it may take root and bear. Be comforted"—and she strained me to her

breast—"you have good gifts within you—gifts of the same God who clouds the sky and sends that rain; and besides these gifts of the immortal soul, you have bodily gifts around you which are far too blessed to be despised. All these you know. Now, be your own wise self again." "*I feel in such a struggle, dear mother.*" "Yes, my boy, I know it. *Come forth the conqueror!*

> "'It is a time of sadness, and thine heart,
> Although it knows and loves the "better part,"
> Feels wearied with the turmoil and the strife,
> And all the needful discipline of life."

"They are very beautiful," said Ralph, who had laid his head upon his hand. "Oh! how beautiful it must be to have such a mother!"

"It is, Ralph; but we are not all gifted alike, either in bodily or spiritual gifts. You must remember that there are not many talented as you are—and talents are sacred things."

"They may be; but, oh! what a strange world this is!"

"You must remember," Morley continued, without heeding Ralph's observation, "how few there are who understand music as you do: who can play the guitar better? who have a richer taste for poetry, painting—for any of the fine arts?"

"Will these bring *happiness?*" asked Ralph.

"No—alone they will not; neither will a comfortable home and good parents. There is but one standard for man's happiness; all else ends in wreck."

"What is that?"

"Faith," answered Morley, gently but firmly.

Ralph filled his meerschaum in silence; after two or three puffs, he said, "The question is, what is faith?"

"'*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*'—that is faith, Ralph."

"Is that in the Bible, Ernest? does it explain like that?"

"Yes; it tells us that '*through faith we*

understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear;' so, many things which we think we understand now, have a meaning far beyond our comprehension."

"Exactly; but I think people are so differently constituted: some cannot think of things in that way; it must be a great comfort when one can; and when, in some lives, all things seem to go crooked, it is a difficult matter to believe them straight. Now, to-day, if I had felt any hope, or *faith* if you will, that before long I should be standing, brush in hand, before a canvass twelve feet high, my own master, going my own way up the glorious road of the 'art of arts'—a dazzling future before me, in which I might dwell in oblivion to the clods of earth, and forget my paltry lot in my chosen brilliant calling!——"

"Hold, master Ralph!" cried Morley, smiling; "you are going too far in your enthusiasm. What are your *clods of earth*

and your *paltry lot?* It is trying, especially to your temperament, to be unable to follow the bent of your inclination; but, at least, man, be thankful that you are better off than many; be thankful, at least, for your senses and your limbs, which enable you to employ your time in other ways than the one to which you aspire."

"Senses and limbs! why, any poor wretch has them, at least the latter; at all events, those who have not are out of the argument altogether, and, in my opinion, ought never to be allowed to exist."

"Your opinion does not hold good with what I quoted from that which ought to be the 'guide of life'—*Things 'which are seen are not made of things which do appear.'*"

"But you surely do not mean that any deformed creature—any hideous being of flesh, without proper proportions, without limbs, for instance—ought to be allowed to live? What could such miserable wretches do? Why, Ernest, the idea of such abortions is horrible!"

Morley did not reply immediately; not till Ralph, who had worked himself up till he had grown very warm with his subject, expressed his horror again at the bare supposition of "such useless maimed things being permitted to walk the earth, and his great approbation in the belief that they would be, and always had been, 'crushed in the birth.'"

"If they were not intended to live, would they be sent?" asked Morley, quietly.

"Then you really do mean that the greatest object one can conceive should be kept alive to disgust the eyes of his fellow-mortals? well, Ernest, I can never agree with you in such an opinion."

"My dear Ralph, you are heated to-night. I cannot help smiling, for you look at me as though I was going to present you with a specimen."

They both laughed. "I only say that the body—the part we see—however vile it may be in our eyes, may not be made of things which do appear,—meaning that the inward part which we cannot see—the soul

—may be as equally beautiful as the body is vile."

"But what use would a man be to himself or others without limbs, for instance," questioned Ralph, shaking his head, and looking very incredulous.

"Do you remember the picture you so much admired—the one I could hardly *tear* you from, as you called it—in the Louvre, yesterday?"

"What, the Magdalen at the feet of our Saviour? indeed I do; but what the deuce has that to do with a man without limbs?"

"Simply," said Morley, coolly, "that it was painted by a man without any."

"The devil!—I beg your pardon; but, really, Ernest, are you aware what you are saying?"

"Quite so, my friend; I've not taken leave of one of my senses, although you look as if you thought I had. That man, Ducornet, was perhaps the most deformed, hideous creature our Maker ever sent into the world. He had no arms; his legs hardly deserved

that appellation, being merely like two small bones, with four toes at the end of each; but Cesar Ducornet was a grand historical painter: he won the golden medal in the exhibitions of the Louvre; he was a member of the Imperial Society of Science, of Agriculture, and the Arts, at Lille, where he dwelt. He was born there, in the Rue St. Jacques, in the humble dwelling of a poor shoemaker, who was his father, and who was also his beast of burthen; for, while Ducornet lived, which was for upwards of thirty years, his father carried him about, and he kept that father and himself, *although he had no arms;* he held a palette with one foot, and with the other a pencil; in his mouth he carried a large brush; he had a scaffolding erected for his large pictures; and thus, shapeless and maimed as he was in his body, he poured forth the beauty and the rapture of his soul!"

"Wonderful, wonderful indeed!" murmured Ralph, who had let his pipe out, and sat with eyes transfixed, like one who

scarcely credits the evidence of his senses.

"I have told you this to prove to you, dear Ralph, that even a man brought into this world without limbs may be of much use, and, moreover, may glorify his Creator. The subjects of his pictures are grand—such as can never die."

"But how extraordinary! how wonderful! Poor fellow! if it had not been for his talent, where would have been his enjoyment!"

"The Almighty," observed Morley, slowly, "when he afflicts is sure to recompense the afflicted."

"Well," said Ralph, relighting his pipe and puffing very hard, "I never could have believed such a thing possible."

"All things are possible," remarked Morley, in a low tone.

"I wish it was possible to alter not only my position in life, but *myself*," quoth Ralph, with a forced laugh.

"It is possible to alter *yourself*, Ralph; you are altering much."

"Not much for the better, I suspect,"

observed the youth, more seriously, remembering how nearly he had upset the old lady. "But I think that a soaking wet day is enough to damp any fellow in my circumstances," he added, with another attempt at merriment.

Morley's keen eye perceived moisture in those of the speaker, and, rising from his chair, he took the other's hand, and pressing it warmly, said, "Don't be downcast, old fellow! Rome wasn't built in a day, and the disagreeable part for some of us is the pulling down before we can build up."

"But fancy me laying it all on the day," returned Ralph, vainly endeavouring to conceal his emotion. "You have been out all through it, got drenched, and done I don't know what all."

"My dear fellow, I have only done what was before me to do—there's no credit in that."

"Yes, there is," put in Ralph.

"But as to what you say of the day," continued Morley, turning the subject from

himself, and not noticing Ralph's interruption, "I think a miserable wet one is very depressing to anybody; but a great deal depends upon the circumstances in which we are placed, and much, undoubtedly, upon our own selves. Have you read those beautiful lines to this effect in one of Bulwer's works—I think the first he ever wrote?"

"No," was the reply; and Morley, little thinking that the lady of his heart at that moment was reading from the same author, quoted the following:—

"Vainly the world revolves upon its pole,
Light, seasons, darkness—these are in the soul."

"They are beautiful," said Ralph, "and I shall often think of them." He repeated them, and added, "They are too true."

"While you are thinking of them don't forget about the alteration," pleaded Morley, with the same searching glance of his kindling eye.

"I will think about it—but I have so much to pull down," answered Ralph, smiling.

"You will be helped; we can all find *help*," retorted Morley.

With those words Morley turned to the fire, for he was much moved. "I believe it, although I don't quite understand you. It's getting late, isn't it?" remarked Ralph.

"Yes; we must be off to bed, and if fine to-morrow we'll start early for Versailles."

The young men exchanged a warm "good-night," and retired to their separate apartments.

Ernest Morley stood at his dressing table; he took off his watch, and looked mechanically in the glass before him. While divesting himself of his coat, he murmured, "Poor fellow!" and before he disrobed further he opened a small book with a velvet cover and a gold clasp. On the fly-sheet were these words: "To my Ernest, from his devoted mother." There were tears in his eyes as he turned the pages to the one he sought,—"He may well say it is beautiful to have *such a mother*;" and after a few seconds he closed

the book, and in whispered accents murmuring "I will pray for him," he sank upon his knees.

Young man of fashion! why that look of incredulity, and that curled lip? Yes, Ernest Morley knelt and prayed! He was surrounded by fashion as you are, in the homestead; he had wealth at his command; he was of noble birth, of ancient blood, of courtly lineage. He was the possessor of a fine form, a peerless brow, and a manly heart. Many a titled lass of high degree would have placed her hand confidingly and gladly in that of Ernest Morley. He would go to the wine-cellars, and sing a good song, and give himself up, as you may do, to the enjoyment and freedom of the hour; but, young man of fashion, he never closed his eyes in sleep without doing that simple thing—simple in itself, but how replete with consequences!—falling on his knees to return thanks unto his Maker for the mercies of the time past, and to beseech strength and guidance for the time to come.

But now the prayer which rose from his lips so fervently was replete with petition and mediation for another—for the youth who, lying in a chamber very near to his own, was tossing from one side to another, vainly striving to gain that rest and peace for which he could not seek; but Morley sought it for him with the faith which "saveth the sick," and assureth "him who hath committed sins that they shall be forgiven him."

Young man of fashion! did God heed him as he prayed? Undoubtedly, for he prayed constantly. *Mercy*, too, would have interceded for him in such a cause, had it been the first time he had lifted his heart unto his God. "*But the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*"

CHAPTER VI.

"I cannot wed thee!—nay, my heart is given—
Why ask to-day?—To-morrow I'd have striven
To veil my heart, ay, and to seize as pelf
The feeling which thy one word made reveal itself."

Rose had returned home to her mother's little villa sooner than she had intended. The reason was this: Captain Riggin, who resided in the neighbourhood of Teevesdale, had curried such favour with the old General, that he had become almost a daily visitor at the Park, had paid Miss Lindsay the most marked attention, and had, suddenly, one day "proposed to her," when she had refused him decidedly, but kindly, thanking him for his compliment.

After he had gone, and she had cried a

little, as most young ladies (who have any feeling) do upon such occasions, she went up stairs into her own room, and began to feel a great and perhaps natural desire to be with her mother. The General met the young man in the Park, and was then made acquainted with his disappointment, which, to do him justice, was most genuine, as he proved on a later day.

Now, when Rose came down stairs, about an hour afterwards, her uncle was standing before the fire, with his back towards it and his arms behind him (a true Englishman's position), looking very grave. He shook his head at her as she advanced towards him; but seeing her eyes looked rather red, he pulled her to him and kissed her. She laid her hand on his shoulder, and, looking up, asked if he had seen George Riggin.

He replied that he had, and that he pitied the poor fellow, and thought she had not acted rightly or kindly in refusing his offer.

"Would you have me wed a man I cannot love?" asked Rose.

"Why can't you love him, child? Nonsense! you would love him fast enough soon. It's only a little coyness. Why, a young thing like you ought to be ready to love anything or anybody."

"Such general love, uncle, would hardly do in such a case," replied Rose, firmly. "The man I marry I must love far more and in a very different way to anybody else."

"But how do you know you would not feel all that sort of thing for George Riggin?—he's a good-hearted, fine young chap. A young girl with her affections free could hardly help loving a man who loves her."

Rose Lindsay's mental vision had fled back into the past. She could not help thinking that what had taken place in his own lifetime should have caused her uncle to have given her different advice, and not to have urged any rash steps in so all-important a subject as matrimony. "Poor old man! he is as light-hearted as ever," thought she;

but while she turned these things over in her mind her uncle's eyes were fixed upon her penetratingly; perhaps he, too, divining the cause of her abstraction, had gone back in memory over part of the old road.

"Perhaps your little heart's not so free, Rosey? eh!"

He spoke suddenly and she started, blushing deeply.

"Dear uncle," she replied, hurriedly, looking very confused, "if it was ever so free I never could marry Captain Riggin."

It has been said before, that Uncle Lindsay had been, all his life, a stranger to the deeper feelings of a woman's heart; he had looked upon them as pretty toys to be petted and caressed; and we cannot wonder at this, when we consider how little had transpired in his own immediate career to prove the truth and bravery of some—their constancy and tenderness. But latterly he had considered his niece something superior to the generality of her sex. As her character developed, and her young mind expanded, he

perceived lights and shadows which very much puzzled his understanding. The old man possessed a mind of innate delicacy, and he regarded his niece's confusion with deep respect, and said, after a few minutes, in a tone almost reverential, "The reason, my girl, why I interfered in this little business was not only my pity for poor Riggin, who I believe is much attached to you, but I am very anxious, my Rosey, to see you well mated before I die."

"Pray, don't talk of that, dear uncle."

"But I wish you to hear me, child. I cannot live many years. At my death you have great wealth, and necessarily much will be upon your hands and mind. Your mother is very delicate—I don't think a long liver—and you may perhaps be the mistress of a large estate, alone and unprotected. And, Rosey, a wealthy woman, young and handsome, requires protection even more than a poor one."

Miss Lindsay's eyes were full; she embraced her uncle, and warmly thanked him

for all that he had said, still maintaining her conviction that she could never "love Captain Riggin;" "and, dear uncle," she continued, "do you not think, as things are, that I had better go home to mamma for a time?"

To her surprise the General concurred in her opinion, and promised to remain a few days at the villa, whither he conducted his niece on the following day.

He did not much like returning to the Park without her, but Rose had an idea that it would be indecorus for her to be at Teevesdale so shortly after the late little affair, and Mrs. Lindsay thought it better that she should remain at home for a few months. So the old gentleman had to content himself with a game at backgammon each evening with his friend, Sir Edward Morley, either at his own house or that of the baronet; and, such was his genial nature that on evenings when the weather prevented these meetings, he would, rather than sit alone, have in the old Indian servant he had brought to England on his

last visit to those sunny climes, and talk of days gone by to the old woman who had often tended him in sickness, patiently and tenderly.

Miss Lindsay had been at home for about three weeks, when one morning, after she had finished reading to her mamma (who was a sweet, intellectual-looking woman, not unlike her sister, Mrs. Thornton, but more interesting in appearance), and who was comfortably ensconced upon a couch by the fire at some light needlework — just as Rose had put up the book, and was about to give her canary some fresh seed and water, a letter was put into her hand from Eve Ending. It ran as follows:—

"My dearest Rosey,—I am sure you will be very surprised at what I am going to tell you. Ernest Morley was here yesterday, greatly to our astonishment, as we did not know that they had arrived home from their travels—did you? I should think not, as Mr. Morley has not been home yet, and you

said in your last that you had then left Teevesdale some days past. Well, only think of this—Ralph has taken a studio in London, and he's set up as an artist! From what I heard, I fancy Mr. Morley is going to pay for it for him, but I dare not ask any questions of poor Aunt Rachel, for she has been crying all the evening because uncle was in such a dreadful rage, and declares he'll *cut Ralph off*, as he calls it, and have nothing more to do with him; but you know, Rosey, that uncle does not always mean what he says; he seems much more cool this morning, and I am in hopes that all will be well in time. It is what Ralph always longed for, to be an artist, and he is so clever; but he ought, indeed, to have consulted uncle; he has not behaved rightly. I am very sorry. From one thing Aunt Rachel said, I imagine he was afraid to let uncle know of his plans, for fear he would not let him execute them. But what grieves me more than all is that uncle, in his anger, behaved so rudely to Mr. Morley—who,

you know, is so good; he pleaded for Ralph a long time, and did not seem to notice uncle's anger (so aunt says) until uncle pointed to the door, which was so very unkind, I can hardly help crying while I write this, because, you remember, I told you when I last wrote, in the only letter aunt had from Ralph while he was at Paris, he said how good and noble Mr. Morley's conduct to him had been. Aunt says she thinks that the studio is in Newman Street; if you can find it out, dear Rose, I know you will go to Ralph and do all you can to make him write or come to uncle. And, oh! dear Rosey, do what you can for him in other ways, for I fear he will miss many comforts which he had at home; and try to convince him of his error; for I do think, by uncle's look this morning, that if he came and acknowledged it he would be forgiven. You will comfort him, will you not, dear Rosey? And believe me ever, with love to Mrs. Lindsay, your attached and loving

"EVE ENDING."

Miss Lindsay's countenance grew from contempt into positive anger as she read the above. "Who was Dr. Thornton, that he was to take away people's manuscripts and turn people out of his house at pleasure?" Of the former fact she had been made acquainted by one of Eve's previous letters.

"I'll go and have my likeness taken, the very first opportunity, and pay Ralph handsomely—that I will!" she continued aloud, handing the letter to her mother.

Mrs. Lindsay, with whom the Doctor was no favourite, agreed with her daughter as to the injustice of his behaviour. "But I always think, my love, it is better to leave family quarrels alone; nevertheless, do as you please as regards assisting Ralph. I should like to have a good likeness of you; your uncle has one."

"I wouldn't go to Doverton again if it wasn't for dear Eve," observed Rose, still looking very warm.

"Oh, my dear, don't say so: there is your grandmamma and your aunts. By the bye,

I expect your Aunt Maria here one day this week."

"Not to stay, I hope, mamma. I don't want another lecture on consistency."

"No, not to stay, my love," returned Mrs. Lindsay, smiling, "although perhaps we could all bear a little more consistency, Miss Blue included."

"I suppose she'll be full of her questions about Uncle Lindsay."

"Oh, yes; she would very much like to be mistress of Teevesdale Park."

"I wish she may get it," was Rose's laughing reply.

And now, dear reader, you must kindly change carriages, and travel backwards for a short space in this history, that we may put you on your right line of railway. In the carriage you enter are seated our two travellers, Ernest Morley and Ralph Thornton. Their feet have been safely landed on their native shore, and they are now on their way from Southampton to London. From their gestures and conversation, one may perceive

that an excellent understanding is established between them.

"What a piece of fortune for me, that your father should have a house of that description. I'm only afraid I shall be unable to carry it on after the six months, because I know the rent of such rooms must be very high," remarked Ralph.

"Seventy pounds a-year, I think he said in his letter," answered Morley, carelessly. "But Mr. Boyle, Turner's young friend, may be abroad longer than that; he talked of going to Italy to study, I believe."

"Maybe; but then I couldn't inhabit them longer, without paying the full rent. I don't like it as it is—not at all," observed Ralph.

"Don't you? That's spoken like your old self, not your new one," said Morley, smiling. "I thought that point was settled long ago, and that you had arrived at the conclusion that you could submit to be favoured for once."

"For once?—for a good many times of

late, I suspect," was Ralph's reply, with an expression in his face, as he glanced at his friend, different to any it had worn before his departure from England; it might be termed "gratitude," or "affection." "But, in truth, Ernest, I could not be withholden to your father for longer than the time specified. For six months I accept the loan of the rooms, and shall never, to my dying day, forget your kindness or your father's."

"There, that'll do about that, old fellow. I hope you'll get on in them to your heart's content, *Sir Ralph Thornton.*"

The youth laughed at his friend's apostrophe, and then they talked over their plans, which were to be transacted thus:—

They were to proceed together from the terminus to Morley's hotel, where Ralph was to remain with Morley that night. On the following morning the latter was to proceed to his father's house in Newman Street, which contained the rooms at Ralph's disposal, in order to acquaint the woman who had the care of it, of the expected

advent of that young gentleman, and to see if the present tenant had vacated, that Ralph might take possession on the day following. In the mean time the artist was to procure all things necessary for the commencement of his profession; but Morley assured him that he need only purchase minor articles, as the rooms were already stocked with all that was requisite in furniture and appurtenances. They were then, after they had lunched, to go on to Belgrave Square, where Ernest's sister resided, who was to be let into their secret. If they had known Rose Lindsay had been at home, they would have gone to the Villa instead; but Mrs. Lindsay's health being so indifferent, they feared they might intrude; otherwise Ernest Morley felt more happy at the Villa than anywhere else, except his home; for he was very fond of Rose's mother, and she of him.

Accordingly, on the succeeding morning, Ernest took a cab and drove to Newman Street. He alighted at the door of one of the best looking houses.

"Very glad to see you, sir! It does one good to behold your face. How like you grow to his honour, to be sure!" were words which welcomed him as he entered.

"And how are you, Mrs. Bounce?"

"Quite well, sir, by God's mercy. And how do you find yourself after all your journeyings?"

Mrs. Bounce was well named, for she was all *bounce* by nature. Her form was very bulky, and she had a way of bouncing in a consequential manner whenever she moved. When she spoke she bounced out her words, and *mouthed* all she said, that it might appear the more important. Her husband (whom she made clean all the windows, and sometimes her tins and kettles, after his business hours, which were consumed in a toy-warehouse) was a pale, thin, little man. One cold winter's day she had bounced upon him, to keep him warm for life. Such were the couple (and they were a very respectable one in their way) who had the care of this house belonging to the baronet.

Each floor had its different tenant. On the ground one dwelt a French Madame, who gave dancing lessons at home and abroad; and she being absent on the present occasion, Mrs. Bounce ushered Mr. Morley into the Dancing Academy.

"Well, are the rooms ready, Mrs. Bounce?"

"Lor' bless me! no, sir; Mr. Liston never left till Monday, and all day yesterday and part of this morning the people have been clearing away his things."

"Oh, then they are vacant?"

"Yes, vacant of Mr. Liston, sir, and his goods, all his pictures—half-done, and none of them finished; but the rooms want cleaning, sir, from top to toe; yes, absolutely from top to toe, as my Dorothy says, before a living gentleman could place his foot in them."

"I am sorry to say I must break through Dorothy's mandate, and go to look at them myself, Mrs. Bounce, as my friend wishes to come into them to-morrow."

"To-morrow, sir! Well there's nothing

I would not do to oblige you, if I was up all night cleaning myself; but really, sir, they're not fit for you to put your foot in. I can't say much against Mr. Liston, for a kinder-hearted gentleman could not exist, except that he made dirt faster than we could clean it away. Why, the only reason he stayed till Monday was that he might go to the theatre on Saturday night, and then there was his supper when he came home for about half-a-dozen besides himself, this wicked little Madame here among the number. I don't want to complain, as I told your honourable father, Mr. Morley, but such goings-on don't do in a house of this respectability."

"Well, it is partly for this cause that my father is making the present change."

"Ah! I thought so," broke in Mrs. Bounce; "especially when people can't pay their rent. Mr. Liston was a nice young man and very kind to my Dorothy; but, really, he had great faults, and ——"

"Never mind Mr. Liston's faults now,

Mrs. Bounce; we have, of course, put him to a great deal of inconvenience, requesting him to leave so soon; he has behaved very well about it, and my father is very willing to wait till he finds it convenient to pay his rent, or till his friends do it for him; he is of a good family, and no doubt it will be all right."

"But, dear me, sir, look at his bills! I have one from his butcher, £25, and his washerwoman's is as much."

"But has he not told you where to forward them?"

"Yes, sir, to his friend's in Bernard-street; I have forwarded a good many smaller ones there already, but the largest, Mr. Cross's, the upholsterer—you remember the large red-baize throne for the models, with the screen and all complete?"

"I remember when L—— occupied those rooms everything was in perfect order."

"Yes, sir, and so it ought to be now, as he left it; but you'll say, sir, it's in more than *order* now. He actually had that screen,

and throne, and all the chairs covered with crimson velvet; and there's a beautiful little table of inlaid wood, I'm told of great value, —it's got a twisted bottom, sir; I beg your pardon," she added, seeing Mr. Morley smile, "a pedestal, sir, in the correct way of speaking, and every other thing of ornament which the rooms, as furnished by Mr. Martin, to your honoured father's order, could well do without."

"And for none of which he has paid?" asked Morley.

"Not for one single article, sir. Shall I fetch you the account?"

Morley assented; and while the good woman bounced down stairs for the same, he coolly walked up to the rooms in question. They looked furnished now, certainly, fit for a prince, but in a state of the greatest dirt and confusion, as rooms will look after a night's debauch; and Morley rightly conjectured that Mrs. Bounce and her niece Dorothy, in common with most people of that class and preferment, considered that when

a gentleman was about to leave his lodgings they could not be too much neglected, or collect too much dust; consequently, the rooms since the Saturday's supper and songs, &c., had remained unmolested by duster or brush. When Morley received the account of Mr. Cross, the upholsterer, he was a bit taken aback by the amount, and stood for some minutes regarding it with an air of consideration, heedless of the continued prattling of the talkative Mrs. Bounce.

"Now, Mrs. Bounce," said he at length, "will you listen to me?"

"Certainly, sir," she replied, a little awed by his grave manner.

"We should not have thought of soliciting the departure of Mr. Liston without due notice, had it not been that a young and very dear friend of mine is desirous of obtaining a studio in this locality, all of which I explained in my letter to him."

"Oh! so he said, sir; he said you spoke most handsomely ——"

"Well, Mrs. Bounce, what I wish to im-

press upon your mind is, that I desire my friend who is coming (Mr. Thornton) to be kept entirely ignorant of this matter."

"Oh, sir, not one word shall he hear!" interrupted Mrs. Bounce.

"You must admonish your niece, who I have heard is rather given to chatter, against mentioning Mr. Liston's name in Mr. Thornton's presence; for he is a young gentleman who could not bear to be under obligation to anybody, which he might feel he was were he to understand that Mr. Liston vacated for him. And now, let these rooms be in readiness by four o'clock to-morrow afternoon, and prepare a comfortable little dinner; I shall dine here with my friend. For this I will sign you a cheque below."

"*You* give a cheque for that bill, sir! it's Mr. Liston's," exclaimed the astonished Mrs. Bounce.

"I know it; I wish the account to be sent to him, or rather to his friend's, all the same. I will see Mr. Cross and explain the matter to him. Mr. Liston ought not

to have had these things covered—it was not his property to meddle with; however, rather than there should be any chance of annoyance to the future possessor of the rooms, I will liquidate the debt; then if, hereafter, Mr. Liston should do the same, which undoubtedly he will, the money can be returned to me. There is one other little matter," continued Morley, hurriedly, as Mrs. Bounce began pouring forth her approbation at this magnanimity; "I must not forget to speak to you about your niece."

"About my niece, sir?" echoed Mrs. Bounce, looking much surprised.

"Yes, she is, I have no doubt, what you call her, a very good girl."

"Oh, sir! she's most indefatigable; Mr. Liston said ——"

"Yes; but what I wish to say is, that what might please Mr. Liston might not please Mr. Thornton—he has a very great dislike to talkative people, especially of that class, I mean—" hesitated Morley, endeavouring to correct himself, fearing to offend Mrs.

Bounce's dignity; "I mean, you know—in short, he does not like freedom from those who wait upon him."

"Certainly not, sir," said Mrs. Bounce, looking rather stiff, and fluttering the gay ribbons on her cap as she tossed her head, a little wondering who and what manner of man the new-comer could be, for Mr. Morley, son of Sir Edward Morley, of Morley Court, Bart., to take such pains for his future comfort. "My girl Dorothy means no ill, sir," she said, presently, in a softer tone, as a little event which had taken place the day before occurred to her mind; "I am sorry though to confess that she is apt now and then to forget herself, as all young people do; our No. 3, the third floor, complained of her the other day—she had, I suppose, made some remark when she took his chop in, which diverted his thoughts from his writing—he's a book-man, wonderful clever, as I've heard tell."

"That is just what I mean, Mrs. Bounce," said Morley, humouring the old lady's ideas.

"When people of talent are giving their talent play, either in writing or painting, such great conception must not be disturbed by intrusion of commonplace observations."

"Cer-t-a-in-ly not, sir," coincided Mrs. Bounce, authoritatively.

And so, all settled, Morley left the studio and jumped into his cab, without even seeing Mrs. Bounce's most bouncing curtsey on the door-step, which she considered to be in Madame's last style, and he drove to his solicitor's.

As the cab whirled away down streets and up turnings, a perpetual maze, Ernest Morley's thoughts ran thus: "That fellow's going wrong, I'm afraid; hope he's got no very fond parents; I should think he'd be the death of his mother, if they're not well off. Something bad in the culture, I should think. From what the woman said, he's good-hearted at least; and from the heart all actions flow; but the good blood has run by some means into an adverse, corrupted channel. Poor fellow! *Man* certainly is in many

instances the *creature of circumstances;* but Ralph carries this creed too far—I am glad I offered to pay the last half-year's rent, or I can see now he never would have gone when he did. I don't think I must let my father know of all this just yet, or perhaps he'll repent his generous loan to Ralph; he sha'n't be the loser anyhow. I wouldn't have this come to Ralph's ears for anything; his pride would rise, or that stubborn feeling called pride by the world, and then all which has been done by the help of God, would be undone; and that I should deplore. No; let him have his chance, poor fellow, that he may gain happiness here, and seek for it hereafter; which he may do when he is employed in the pursuit he loves. Yes! there is a great deal in obeying the impulse of nature."

It was past six o'clock on the evening following Morley's visit to the studio, that Ralph stood there, upon the large tiger's skin before the fire, alone, and "monarch," for the time at least, "of all he surveyed."

His eyes had wandered over the costly furniture, now looking splendid by the brilliant gas-light issuing from the handsomely ornamented burners, until they, for very rest's sake, turned to objects of less allurement, and fixed themselves upon the folding-doors leading to the student's bedroom. Upon those doors, varnished but six months ago, had been painted many a curious design and grotesque figure, affording a strange variation to the otherwise stately appearance of the apartment, evidently the effects of some half-drunken frolics. Ralph continued to gaze upon them until his mind, which had been in a kind of chaos, reverted to his friend who had left him half an hour before to return to his hotel, having letters to write, the chief of which was one to his mother: he had said he longed to see her and all at Morley Court again, and wrote word that he should be there, if possible, on the following Sunday, for which purpose he would have most probably to travel on Saturday night, as the next day, Friday, he had promised to go down to

Doverton to break the news of Ralph's settlement to the Doctor, and intended visiting his old tutor, Mr. Greenhill, at whose house he purposed sleeping that night; he must return to Ralph to report the result of his communication at Sea View before leaving London again. Employed thus, his mind filled with the affairs and the affections of other people, with but little regard to his own personal comfort or inclination, we leave Ernest Morley for a while, and return to Ralph Thornton.

Still standing on the tiger-skin, his thoughts, we say, reverted to his friend. He folded his arms before him, and his eyes, grown weary of the strange, wild devices on the folding-doors, sought the striped pattern of the soft covering on which he stood. The treasured robe of a beast whose carcase, with all its ferocity, had perished like every other earthly thing, but the *skin remained.* The tiger even could leave a memento, and one never to be despised, but preserved and coveted by the human race. One may give

way to the random meanderings of the brain till the conglomeration of ideas becomes in its mazy bewilderment painful—ay, almost insupportable—to the senses. It was so in this instance, for, as many have done in the same extremity, Ralph made a mental rush from the tangled ball he had woven.

For the better edification of the reader, his thoughts may be transcribed thus: "Could I ever have believed I should have been master of such a place! It is all I could in my most sanguine dreams desire. What a good fellow he is to interest himself so for me. But there seems to be some mystery about it all; I can't tell why. And he has taken all the disagreeable part of telling that old curmudgeon at Doverton; perhaps he'll take it better than I expect. Morley says, 'Everybody has some good in him.'" And here, as those alone can understand who have been suddenly placed in the position they most desire, he fell to thinking more charitably of days long past—bringing to mind sayings and doings of that "curmudgeon"

he had slurred over in his memory before, or, if borne in remembrance, he now judged he could never have discerned their proper import.

All these retrospections, and many more, passed in rapid succession through the artist's brain. Scenes while travelling—evening scenes—during all of which his friend's character shone like a bright star, whose lustre no cloud could dim. And all the time his eyes were riveted on the tiger's skin, which he was, unwittingly, winding in his dreamy fabrication, and which, at last, caused him to make the plunge from abstraction—becoming too strained in its intensity—and to fix his attention upon the article itself.

"Yes; a beast can leave a proof, and a good one, of its existence, while some men, of high genius and noble purpose, fall from the stage in obscurity, without one token left that they have been. But I now can wield my sceptre! thanks to ——"

He paused and thought. Morley would have told him to thank his God!

Throwing himself into the arm-chair, with its velvet cushions, he looked round him again, gazing from the easel to the model-throne—to the packages thereon, the perquisites of the day—all in readiness for his hand. He had ordered a canvas to be sent in that evening, some six feet high; it was not to arrive till seven o'clock. He did not wish his friend to see it; he wished to surprise him on his return from Doverton, by the commencement of a picture which should meet his taste. He had not yet quite decided upon the subject, but he felt that whatever it should be, gratitude would prompt all his energy in the undertaking. The picture was to be a gift, and the task (although Ralph would hardly have owned it then) one of love.

One morning when they had walked in the Champs Elysées (he recalled this incident to his mind now), and they had been talking about the poor artist, Ducornet, Morley had remarked, "That he thought, in order to secure the fame of a picture, the subject of it should be a great consideration,

especially with one who was about to throw his gauntlet to the world; to cast upon it his first grand production. For there are some subjects, you know," he had continued, "which can never die."

Now, Ralph thought over all those subjects so wondrously treated by the great masters, and owned, within himself, that his friend was right. Although historical paintings of days gone by and days present might elicit universal praise and admiration, there is something of undefined power in those depicting the truths of the "History of histories," of an age whose era is not of our date, that riveteth the mind's eye, while that of the body is subdued, and witnesseth in veneration.

Ernest had said that his father much wished for a large painting of "The Crucifixion," for one end of the gallery of Morley Court. Ralph remembered to have replied, "that he thought that subject was so 'hackneyed;'" and his friend had observed, "that he considered still, a beautiful original might

be made of it, as it was one of those which would live for ever. But there is one subject," he had said, "which I never remember to have seen portrayed, and which has always struck me, would be a beautiful study, and that is, 'Christ's Sermon on the Mount.' There appears to me to be a large scope for the imagination in it. It would seem, from what we are told, before the commencement of the sermon, that His disciples alone followed him up the mountain; but this, evidently, is not limited to the twelve; as we read, at the conclusion, that all 'the people were astonished at His doctrine;' and, 'that great multitudes followed Him' from the mountain. So, according to that, see what room there would be for the display of one's talent on the Mount; and not only of talent, but of feeling; as old and young, of course, were there assembled. And then, our Saviour's own expression, as He delivers that most beautiful and simple of all sermons. But one must read it carefully, and commit some parts to memory, I should imagine, in

order to reveal to perfection the Divine countenance."

The artist, as he sat thus quietly ruminating in his arm-chair, was a little startled by a sharp single knock at his door. It was the girl (the renowned Dorothy) who, in a voice as brisk as her knock, asked if he would take coffee.

Ralph's deep muse was brought to such sudden anchorage, that he looked up bewildered, only hearing the word "coffee." "Yes, if you please," he stammered.

"Make it down stairs or up here?" asked the girl, as quickly and with the same acute accent as before.

After the first cursory glance on his arrival, our student had not bestowed another even in the direction of this his future handmaid. He was, therefore, altogether ignorant of the scowl with which she had regarded him. We may be sure there was nothing very attractive in the person of Dorothy, or the artist's eye would not have been satisfied with that one glance —

although the subject was a serving girl; but she being a "bit of character" in her way, we do not hesitate to introduce her to the notice of the reader.

Now, as Ralph looked up, puzzled at such a brusque manner in a servant, he noted her appearance more accurately than in his first slight observation he had done. But, apparently, it made no more favourable impression, for he very soon turned his eyes in the direction of the skin again. He had only seen a common-looking, sallow-faced girl, rather lean, and below the middle height; but one peculiarity had not escaped him in that short interval, and that was that her eyes did not meet his, albeit she had looked rather boldly than otherwise upon him. Nor did they ever meet those of the person whom she addressed, but looked askant on all, as though they shrank from contact with other orbs. What feeling caused this habitual reservation we cannot tell. "Diffidence" assuredly had nothing to do with it.

After withdrawing his gaze as rapidly as he had given it, Ralph had said rather haughtily, "It does not signify," meaning to speak to the woman of the house upon this and other little matters in the morning. He had not made up his mind whether he should, in the usual way, dine at home. Morley had told him that he thought Mrs. Bounce a trustworthy person, but, like all people in her station, was doubtless better kept out of temptation. Now, he did not know whether his friend had told Mrs. Bounce to procure him coffee and such like necessaries, and the girl's look and manner were, in his opinion, so impertinently free, that he would not condescend to enquire of her. He felt the necessity of commencing housekeeping on a very economical scale, feeling sure that his allowance until he came of age would be but small; and therefore he was determined to take the advice so kindly given him, and "feel his way."

Dorothy, however, was not to be put off with his unsatisfactory reply, and still she lingered

at the door while he, looking from the tiger-skin to the fire, poked it, and then took a paper off the mantel-piece, and began to read, wondering what she meant by standing there watching him, and thinking it was very disagreeable to have such a person in the house.

"Number 1 makes it herself; number 4 has it made for him; we used to make it for number 2," quoth she, with the same volubility as before.

"Be good enough to bring it, if you please, at once," said Ralph, without looking off his paper, but his tone was a little milder, hoping by that means to get rid of her the sooner.

"Made or unmade?" she asked again.

"You may make it, if you please, to-night."

Down the stairs flew Dorothy, as if she had been shot.

"What a horrid temper you are in, child! it is really fearful to see you at times—fearful!" exclaimed the little, pale

Mr. Bounce, who stood alone in the kitchen, in a brown study, as his niece, flying by him like a mad cat, upset two dish-covers, the spice-box, and a bundle of candles, and nearly her small uncle into the bargain. It was a venturous speech for him to make, but the little man was taken off his guard.

"Be off with you! get out of the way! Aunt!" screeched Dorothy, "here's uncle in the kitchen again hindering everybody. Number 2 wants his coffee directly!"

The poor toy-vender made the best of his way to the little parlour at the back, where he was set to cleaning plate for the rest of the evening. Mrs. Bounce bustled about the preparation of the coffee, looking rather timidly at her niece of whom she was a little afraid.

"Well, my love, how have you got on in the studio?"

"Got on?" repeated Dorothy, so snappishly that her aunt desisted from saying anything more just then for fear of offending her still further, for she had never got over

that bouncing speech made at breakfast-time that morning, in reference to the new tenant of the studio. Poor Mrs. Bounce had made it with fear and trembling, cautioning her niece in kindest and finest phrase against talking too much in his presence, against asking questions or making remarks, and indeed against intruding, without true occasion, upon his privacy ("just as if she should!"); but Aunt Bounce knew well she used to go and talk to Mr. Liston by the half-hour together, and that he gave her, on one occasion, an imitation gold chain, which she found accidentally in her drawer; at another time a brooch of the same description. Not that Mrs. Bounce considered there was anything *wrong* in these little harmless attentions to her niece (and if she had she would not have dared say so), but she conjectured that somehow or other those little matters had reached Mr. Morley's ears by the fact of his having alluded to Dorothy's deportment. Whereas, Morley was as innocent of them as the child unborn, and only spoke from his own

observation of a certain freedom in the girl's manner towards himself when he had had occasion to visit the studio; and an old friend of his father's having at a former time been its occupant, he had then been frequently a guest there. Knowing Ralph's tenacious feeling upon this point, as on many others, he had thought it best to warn Mrs. Bounce on the subject. It was hardly to be surprised at, that the good woman feared to offend her niece, for Dorothy did all the running-about of the house, which was no light matter, considering that every floor had its different requirements; therefore, she was esteemed a very important personage, not only by the "bouncing Bounce" herself, but also by the old woman from the workhouse, who was employed to do dirty work, and the boy who ran on errands and cleaned the knives and forks. The pale man brightening up the plate regarded her with a species of horror and aversion he never dared confess. "She got him into more rows" (he would say to himself), than anything else, and when he

did get in her way, which was not seldom, for he had a habit of standing to think (probably upon the ills of life and the strange structure of toys), he would receive such a hearty spank upon his shoulders or vigorous push behind as would make him reel again. It is certainly very annoying when one is in a hurry and full of business to be hindered by the creeping movements of persons of this description, and it was evident that Dorothy experienced this feeling of annoyance to the full, and resented it accordingly.

"Does the young gentleman seem comfortable?" Mrs. Bounce ventured to ask, as the coffee-pot, together with Dorothy's crisp toast, was placed upon the waiter.

"How should I know? You told me not to speak to him," was the sharp reply.

"Well, my love, I thought you might have noticed how——"

"How could I notice him when you told me not to look at him?"

"Well, my love, you are very discerning,

and I thought perhaps you might have observed how——"

"As if I could observe him without seeing him!"

"Well, my love, I ——"

But Dorothy was half-way up the first flight, giving it as her decision that all "the world were a pack of fools."

"Whatever did they see in that boy to make such a fuss about? He might be clever, but he'd never be a Liston. For her part she'd just do what she was obliged, and nothing more, for number 2."

The object of this digression and determination was again merged in reverie on the same topic—his picture.

Would it do to call his first work a "Sermon?" it sounded so like *cant*. How that old "humbug" at Doverton would chuckle when he heard it. He must think of something else.

Here his reflections were again stopped by the coffee-pot being put down violently upon the table by the expert Dorothy, who, breaking her resolution at the first onset,

had, seeing his absence of mind, poured out a cup of the beverage ready for him. He had not so much as heeded her entrance, so engrossed had he been, and she, thinking it time to awaken his attention, had rather exceeded her motive—for she almost feared she had cracked the coffee-pot in her zeal.

The youth stared at her in unfeigned surprise, as he seated himself at the table, and continued to watch her as she closed the shutters, concluding in his mind that she was a most singular person indeed.

"I suppose I can speak to your mistress to-morrow morning?" he asked presently, bringing his thoughts down to the needful things of earth—food and raiment.

"I have no mistress." Bang went the shutter.

"To your mother?"

"I have no mother." A chair was nearly upset.

"To the mistress of the house, then?"

"That's it; yes."

Ralph could hardly repress a smile as

just before leaving the room, she asked, suddenly, "What time?"

And he answered, "What about?" in the same short tone as her own.

"To see my aunt—the mistress?"

"Any time that best suits her convenience; I shall not be going out before twelve o'clock, I daresay."

When our artist laid down to sleep that night, he did not seek sleep. For an hour or more he lay in that dreamy listless state of mind in which he had been ever since Morley's departure. He could hardly realize his new position in life, and had an indistinct idea that he should yet awake and discover that Morpheus had been cheating him. Yet, with all his new possessions and advantages crowding so thickly into the seat of his soul, he could not, try how he would, brain happiness or even calmness—the influence of the spirit could not constrain contentment. He felt a want, a void—a sickening void, which all his good fortune could not fill. "There's something wrong in me I'm sure! I think

I'm diseased. What can I want now? It will be glorious to begin! I will rise early, as soon as daylight appears; and, ere long, the world shall know Ralph Thornton!"

No eye could see the red blood rush into the youth's cheek, nor yet could any ear detect the beating of his heart.

"Now Ernest has often said that 'in any situation in life, one may find comfort in the Bible.' I've often been tempted to try it when I was sorrowing and almost hopeless about this affair—but no doubt I should have found it then, or, as he said, 'something applicable to my case.' As I suppose, the book was written for poor miserable wretches who have no comfort otherwise, but he said in *any situation*,'—I have a good mind to try it now!"

As the artist rose in his bed, he remembered that he did not own the book in question. He had a Prayer-Book, which Eve had given him a year ago, and which he took to church and held in his hand; he knew "Oh, be joyful," and "We praise Thee," from

nearing them chanted each Sunday, but he was ignorant of all its other contents. However, he supposed there might be a *degree* of comfort in the Prayer-Book as there was so much in the Bible; and so he opened it at random, and, stooping down, read by the night-light, what first met his eye—Psalm lxxi. 19,—"Thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side."

"How very strange, to be sure!" he murmured; "I'll shut my eyes and open them suddenly on the opposite page, and if I find anything there, really I shall be tempted to think there is something in it."

He did so, and his eye fell upon the 16th verse of the following Psalm—"There shall be an heap of corn in the earth, high upon the hills; his fruit shall shake like Libanus, and shall be green in the city, like grass upon the earth."

He closed the book, fully satisfied with what he had done and seen. He lay down again, fully determined to do the same whenever he should feel as he had done that

evening; and he felt fully persuaded that he was that "heap of corn high upon the hills," or, rather, that he *was* to be. Poor Ralph! he did not think of the *sickle or the sheaves.*

CHAPTER VII.

"Ye buds of roses and ye flowers of spring,
Why bloom ye here, where all is withering?
Thy verdure would foretell a beauteous sight,
But, oh! beware the subtleness of *Blight!*
Pale would thy roses grow, and paler still
The hearts of those subservient to his will.
Beware! beware!"

It was on the Monday succeeding the day of events recorded (the Thursday on which Ralph Thornton had taken up his abode in Newman Street), that a pale young widow was to be seen picking her way along the muddy road in the neighbourhood of Camden Town.

Before following the widow's steps, it may be better to mention that Ernest Morley had passed a couple of hours with the artist prior to taking his journey

homewards on the preceding Saturday; that in his account of his disagreeable visit he had softened the Doctor's conduct to himself considerably, but not the Doctor's acceptance of the news he had taken with him to Doverton, with the particulars of which the reader has already been made aware by Miss Ending's letter to Rose Lindsay, and the relation of which did not surprise Ralph in the least, as his uncle's unreasonable anger was no more than he had expected it would be, on his first cognizance of the independent step that had been taken. Still he was very glad that it *had* been taken; and when his friend, who was much concerned and astonished at the result of his mission, endeavoured to persuade him to write to his offended uncle immediately, apologizing for having acted without first consulting him (which Morley still maintained it was Ralph's duty to have done), the latter, although in his heart he owned Morley right, obstinately refused to act in this instance according to his advice,

and maintained "that his friend did not understand the old *growler* as he did, or he would agree that it was the better way to leave things as they were, till his humour took a turn, which it might do some day, when he found his nephew *flourishing*."

Ralph was correct in his idea that his friend did not understand his uncle. The Doctor's bigoted opinions, and the narrow view he took of human life and human feeling, were enigmas to Ernest Morley. Nevertheless, he only lost his temper once during his disagreeable visit to Sea View, and that once was at its close, when the irritated Doctor had given it as his opinion that "that fool of a girl Rose Lindsay had worked the boy up to do this. A girl who was *fool* enough to scribble flowery nonsense called 'novels,' was *fool* enough to do any *fool's act*, or make any other *fool* commit them." And then Morley's blood, usually flowing so calmly and kindly, had risen painfully, and he had sternly replied, "that the Doctor's present unnatural behaviour

was as *novel* in its injustice, and as ridiculous, as anything that *any fool* could pen in a book so called." This had ended the interview, in a manner far from polite or satisfactory. But Morley had not many minutes quitted the door to which the Doctor, boiling in his rage, had shown him, before the latter inwardly repented of his want of self-government—partly, perhaps, from the cause that the person he had insulted was a baronet's son. However, during the night his mind underwent reaction, as most minds do after storms of violent passion. His better spirit began to work, and it would have been well perhaps for more than one in this history had he allowed it to work its way *alone*. Memory exerted her power, and he saw Ralph again a little child, and stood once more by the bedside of his dying brother. "He would do so and so, and so and so; but he must have *advice*." And so, after a night of extreme mental inquietude and indecision, he determined

upon writing to summon Mr. Blight to consume his doubts and fears.

And now, after this digression, we must return to the interesting-looking widow, who, with garments worn almost threadbare, had yet preserved an air of superiority, and a face which told a tale of "better days." She had been a widow nearly two years, and still wore the close-fitting cap. Her eye glanced anxiously up at the house before which she now stopped. It was a very genteel-looking house; the windows were all very clean and bright; the door-steps as white as hands could make them, and so were those leading down to the area. It looked like a bachelor's house, a very particular bachelor, and very well to do, or that of an old maid in like condition. It belonged to one of the former sex, for on the polished brass plate the poor slender widow read over his name and profession three times, before the boy in buttons condescended to answer her modest knock—"Mr.

Blight, solicitor." While she stands there patiently waiting the pleasure of the buttoned imp who grins at her from the kitchen-window below, we will acquaint the reader with a little of her past history.

In early youth she had been ruined by the man on whose door-step she is now standing. Her father had been a pianoforte-maker, and well employed. After his death, which took place in her childhood, her mother's predilection for drink had sadly impoverished the little substance he had left. It was a terrible example for the child, luckily the only one; but the poor girl had remained innocent of that evil until now. She had resided with her mother in a neat little cottage on Shooters' Hill, and they had taken in a lodger, on whom the girl had to wait; and when her mother was absent, which was very frequent, as she went out every morning in order to scrape together what she very soon expended in her vicious habits—swallowed up in drink—the young girl was left in charge of house, lodger,

and all. When, after a short time, the lawyer had tired of his pretty toy, he craftily introduced her to his young clerk, as a poor relation of his. The boy was ignorant of guile, and quickly enamoured; and the end of it was, that Blight advanced a sum for their wedding, and another for their passage to Australia, whither he advised them to go, taking the old woman with them. And golden promises he held out of success and prosperity, established through his means, when they arrived there. That he had other reasons for aiding and abetting their exportation, will be seen hereafter. They of course never heard anything more of either him or his promises; and when, after the death of her husband (who had been a good one to her), the poor widow, with her mother and child, returned to England, she became immersed in difficulties; for what she earned by constant and untiring industry, her mother squandered away. The son-in-law had been a check upon this badly-disposed

woman. During his lifetime he had given her bed and board, and her own earnings had clothed her; now there were hard struggles, at times almost more than the widow could bear. She had a little money over, a very little, from the store her husband had left her; and how thankful she would be if she could treasure it in safety for herself and child!

About six months previously she had seen the following advertisement in some small newspaper:—"To persons in difficulties.—All persons in pecuniary difficulties are invited to apply to Mr. Blight, solicitor, Searleaf House, Sneakcup Place, Camden Town, who can immediately obtain the protection of their persons and property, from all law proceedings, without one hour's imprisonment. This protection stays all county-court proceedings. Terms very moderate." She had naturally felt a repugnance at first to apply to him who had deceived her youth, and forgotten all his promises of assistance to her husband; but, alone and friendless, she had

overcome these scruples, and had started off the next day, unknown to her mother, to seek aid and advice from the lawyer, who had received her most blandly, and assured her "how hurt and mortified he had felt all through the past years at not once having received tidings as to where they were, and what they were doing in Australia, and, consequently, being unable to render them the service he had so much desired to bestow," &c. The poor widow's heart had then beat with gratitude for his good intentions, and for the kind manner in which she was received by her old admirer, also for the many promises so warmly given, of "soon setting her affairs to rights and her mind at rest." And she had walked home that day with a brisk, firm step, and a brightened eye. "He had behaved like a kind friend; he had spoken with such sympathy, and yet not the slightest freedom; he had talked about poor dear Edward, too, so kindly. How unfortunate that both their letters had miscarried; how she wished she had written from

Launceston again!" And so the poor, unconscious thing had reached her home and her drunken mother, little imagining that both the letters she had deplored had perished in the grate of Mr. Blight's former dwelling, without even perusal.

Now, since that day the widow's feelings had undergone a serious change. She had placed her little all confidently in the hands of the crafty Blight; she had called shortly after doing so, and had been received as blandly as before; but one circumstance even then had not aroused her suspicion, for she was one of those people who never have any, but had caused her to walk home with a heavier step and a downcast, thoughtful eye. She had wished to draw a small sum to pay her rent; her request was denied her, but in the most kindly manner possible, with plausible argument, which soon convinced her that it would be far better not to draw any such amount for the present, but that in the course of a month half the sum she required would be forwarded to her, and so on. The wary

Blight crept round her with insinuations of her little property increasing rapidly if left unmolested for a few months, discoursing upon per centage and the state of the money-market most fluently. His harangue was all like so much Greek or Hebrew to the poor dependant on his will, who since that day had called three times, and written as many, because the lawyer was always "out," or "very much engaged," when she had been. Her two first letters had been answered briefly,—"The money she had wanted should be forwarded if she desired it, but it would be quite contrary to good legal advice to touch the funds in the present monetary embarrassments," &c.

The poor woman sighed a good deal as she read these concise replies to her heart-appealing epistles, and sincerely wished she had had nothing to do with Mr. Blight, or Searleaf House; and that her money, instead of being turned into funds and interest, &c., had remained, plain pounds, shillings, and pence, in her own possession.

There had been no answer to her last, and, therefore, she had once more threaded the maze of streets, and stood now panting before the brass plate, determined, if possible, to see the owner of it, and make an appeal in person to the flinty thing he called his heart. One circumstance we must not omit to mention, before the door is opened to her, which took place after the receipt of the second "few hard lines" from Blight. Her mother, appearing more sober than usual that evening, had asked who the letter was from. She had become of late so clamorous for money, which she believed her daughter had and would not give her, that the latter thought it advisable to inform her of what she had done with it, at the same time assuring her of her belief in a good result, although it might be some time before they benefited by it. But the old woman would not listen to anything more she had to say, but, storming out, "Tell me where he lives!—let me see the wretch!" she went off in such a paroxysm of passion

and tears, that her daughter could only infer that her sobriety had been a counterfeit, and that she had been imbibing as much liquor as ever.

Since that evening she had had no peace of mind; for that there was something preying on her mother's mind she had not a doubt. In her sleep the old woman would call Blight's name with bitter epithets, and cry out that "he did it, but she had not had her share." In vain she endeavoured to ascertain where he lived. Upon this point her daughter was firm, and had too much feeling left (though of a desultory kind) for the man she had once loved, to reveal the place of his abode to one whom she feared would have wrought him injury in some way, albeit she knew not how, for her mother, from a horrible disease brought on by drink, was now nearly bed-ridden. And perhaps it caused her more anxiety even on that mother's account, that it had become necessary to remove from the comfortable lodging they had hitherto inhabited, to one of the lowest

description, in one of London's foulest thoroughfares.

"Is Mr. Blight within?" she asked, with trembling voice, as "Buttons" at last thought fit to make his appearance. The boy was more than usually pert and independent, from the fact of his having given warning the day before; and now he wondered much how he had ever been so "green" as to come to Searleaf House, where the milk of human kindness once flowing in his veins had long since been parched and withered,—how he had ever been so afraid of the cook, who had become as dry and crusty as it was possible for a dependant on Searleaf to be,—and how he had stood in such solemn awe of Searleaf itself, and its master, Blight! He did look with contempt on his ancient "greenness," albeit it would have been well for him could he have called it back.

"I don't know, I'm sure; you can come inside and wait a minute; I'll go and see."

The widow sank exhausted upon a hall-

chair, and the boy, disappearing through an open door to the right, knocked at an inner one. At the words, "Come in," he turned the handle, and, protruding his head into the apartment, asked, still grinning, "Are you at home to Mrs. Hopeful?"

The man of law had an open letter in his hand, one he had received by that morning's post, and he had conned it over many times. There was a lynx-like look in his cunning eyes as he raised them, which changed directly into one of annoyance, not unremarked by his wily page, as he answered, in a disturbed tone, "Haven't I told you always to say 'Out' to Mrs. Hopeful, and this is the second or third time you have disobeyed the order? *I suppose you'll want a character?*"

"Yes, I shall," replied the boy, with a *nonchalance* which astonished the lawyer; "and the Parson 'll ask for 'truthfulness.'"

"Insolent rascal!" muttered the enraged master between his teeth; then suddenly changing his voice and manner into their usual plausible expression, and also assuming

an air of injured innocence, he continued, "Give the poor woman this," putting two sovereigns into the hand of the still smirking 'buttons,' "and say, that her affairs have taken more time and trouble than I expected, but they will soon be arranged in a satisfactory manner; and that she shall hear from Searleaf shortly."

We will not stay to note the eager glance of the poor frail "Hopeful," as she received this information, nor yet the faint flush of renewed "hope" which stole over her sunken cheek, as she, with weary steps, pursued her homeward way. No; our business is, at present, with the owner of Searleaf—the creeping, fawning, gaining, man of law; the all-consuming "Blight."

Many papers lay scattered around him; some were rolled and tied up with red tape, looking as though their contents were sealed and settled—types of many a heartache and scalding tear, and of many a "blighted" hope and withered prospect.

The letter still lay open before him; it

was from his chief dupe, Dr. Thornton, of Doverton. And now he was interlacing the subtle fibres of his brain into a still deeper web of deceit for that dupe's further entanglement. His client's letter was brief and decisive, as all his letters were, but still the crafty solicitor well knew, from its tenor, that the decision would not be carried into action without his concurrence. And while the much-irritated Doctor had summoned his cajoler instantly to Sea View, to discuss the interest of the property bequeathed by John Thornton, his brother, to his nephew Ralph, in order to settle the amount of the youth's future income, until he should become of age and entitled to manage his own affairs; that, in a word, he might henceforward have "nothing more to do with his brother's child, whom he had sworn to cherish," the reader of the document knew, far better than the writer himself did, the nature of the storm then raging in his breast; how the elements of the spirit, like those of Mother Earth, were warring together for the mastery, and pour-

ing forth, in their fierce struggle, that peal of anger; how a feather's touch, skilfully directed, could bring, as by magic, "the stern and the inflexible," to be the vanquished of "the forgiving and the merciful." Yes, well he knew all this; the game was in his hand. He would withhold the feather, and, creeping stealthily around the heart thus lacerated by adverse feeling, he would feed upon its pride. Like "a worm i' the bud," he would dry up the sap, and increase his own nourishment. His purpose fixed, his "deadly fangs prepared," who shall stay their steady, but sure poison? Who purify the polluted air his breath shall give, or the corrupting influence his presence shall impart? Not all an angel's intercession; not all thine, Eve Ending, with thy pure heart's tears, can wash away such *Blight*!

The man of law has risen from his seat; he folds the letter mechanically, and puts it into his waistcoat pocket; he turns to a cabinet, and, unlocking it, puts in sundry agreements, deeds, &c.—"records of ini-

quity"—and he mutters the while, between his teeth, "It's rather a difficult trick, although it's a good hand. I must mind I don' tlose that young 'puppy' while I'm playing on the 'old cur.' This 'll humble him a bit. It *shall* humble him, too—and to *me*! I knew the time would come when I'd bring his head a little lower. But I must be careful—there's a good mouthful there!"

He locked the cabinet, and stood thoughtfully by the window,—"I suppose I had better be off at once. He thinks I've got nothing else to do but to attend to him—well, *it pays*!" He took the letter out of his pocket, and, opening it again, reperused a portion for some minutes in silence,—

"Yes, there's plenty of fish to fry. I must manage to go to that cursed 'Gin Way' too, before I return. I must make something out of that place. The old fool will keep the rotten timber on — so he may thank himself for what he'll lose—*lose*!—

ha! ha!" —— A pause. "Ah!" he resumed, blinking up his cunning eyes till they resembled two crooked button-holes, I wonder what the boy wanted there!—at the 'Gull,' too, of all places in the world! Some of his wild poetic fancies, I suppose—they'll be stopped in that direction, however—luckily for him, perhaps. Yes; *he'd better not cross my path*!"

There was a demoniac expression in his visage as he repeated these last words: "No; he'd better not cross my path *at Sea View either*!"

Was it a redeeming quality in the character of this man of guilt, or is it a feature in it still more repulsive to behold, "the path" to which he alluded?—up which he was crawling, so subtilely, to wind, alas! round what?—the fairest of earth's flowers! Could it be called the divine light of "love" which had pierced through the dark labyrinth of his heart? Nay—rather the longing of the adder for the blood of the unconscious child. Such the craft of the

designing insect, as it glides on its treacherous way over the tendrils of the young vine, whose early fruit it fadeth. . . . .

"I'm glad I sent her those two sovereigns," said the lawyer, putting on his gloves. The current of his thoughts had changed with his countenance, on which now sat a diabolical grin. "I've found her useful before now, poor simple thing! and I may again—and the old hag, her mother, too." . . . .

It was evening at Sea View. In the drawing-room sat Mrs. Thornton, knitting some garment for a poor and needy one—an old pensioner on the bounty of the Blues. Meek and mild as usual, there was yet a disturbed expression on her countenance, which altered the contented air so habitual to her into one of doubt and anxiety. Eve lay on a couch near the fire, an open book was in her hand, but her gaze was abstracted and troubled.

"What a time uncle is with Mr. Blight!" she remarked, after both had been silent for

some time. "You think it will all be right in time, don't you, aunty?"

"I hope so, my love," answered good Aunt Rachel, without raising her eyes from her work.

"I wonder why uncle wanted to see Mr. Blight about it. Don't you think it would have been better if he had written to Mr. Morley, and got him to persuade Ralph to own that he has acted wrong? and then I'm sure uncle would have forgiven him, and it would all have been forgotten?"

"You forget, my dear, how your uncle and Mr. Morley parted."

"No, I don't, dear aunt, only you know how hasty uncle's nature is; and Mr. Morley is so good, particularly to Ralph, he would have done anything, I'm sure, to have made peace between them."

"He might; but you know, my love, that Mr. Blight has the management of all your uncle's concerns and Ralph's property; and, therefore, it is natural to consult him, even if all is right again, because Ralph will

require a certain amount each year to live upon, and Mr. Blight knows best, I suppose, what that must be."

Aunt Rachel gave an involuntary sigh at the end of this explanation, which was seconded by Eve, who remained silent for some minutes, and had just begun again to say, "I wonder," when the door opened, and the Doctor, with his legal adviser, entered. The latter, after holding Mrs. Thornton's hand for a moment, with persevering inquiries regarding her health, &c., to which that lady replied with as much indifference as became her very ladylike nature, turned to the frail girl upon the sofa, and, hardened as the heart of that bad man was, there was a strange thrill of tenderness in it, which shone in his snake-like eye, as he did so. From that look Eve always shrank, and further so when he, as his custom was, raised her little soft hand between his two parched hard ones, for the impression of his dry, thin lips. The Doctor had sat down to the table with an impatient speech to his wife about

the tea, which she had been afraid to make before, lest it should be too strong. He looked flushed and irritated, "not near so calm," thought Eve, "as he did this morning."

"You think that'll be the best plan, then?" he asked, quickly, of Blight.

"Decidedly; I think you have, as you always do, decided rightly."

"I didn't decide it," replied the Doctor, angrily; then, with contempt, he added, "If I had, why the devil should I have sent for *you?*"

"I don't see how we can arrange matters better, to produce a good result," observed Blight, slowly and softly, appearing not to notice the irritation of the other. "You see, if I were to go without your sanction, as it were ——"

The Doctor would not have let him proceed so far, but in endeavouring to speak out of time he had nearly choked himself with tea.

"Without my sanction? didn't I tell you

before, you were to say that I *sent* you?—is that *without sanction?*"

"Oh! if you wish it, let it be so, by all means; but it would appear better to come from you—*not quite so hard* upon the lad—he may relent—he will, depend upon it."

Eve's eyes sought the face of "Blight" with a strange, questioning glance—like one who, at the point of death, hears his ransom won, yet knows not how to credit the report.

"I should think Mr. Blight was right there," ventured poor Mrs. Thornton, timidly, her terrible suspense for the poor youth's future patrimony thawing in the atmosphere of the wily man of law.

"I should think it would be better if you were to knit your tongue up with your wool! What the devil do women know about business?"

Aunt Rachel was silenced, but Eve, rising from the couch, seated herself opposite the Doctor and the lawyer, who had seated himself beside *her*, and, with a pallid cheek but

firm voice, asked if "uncle was going to write to Ralph?"

"Yes," was the laconic reply, in a sharp voice, from the Doctor—so sharp it was, that Eve followed Aunt Rachel's example, and said no more. The Doctor fidgeted in his chair, got up, and saying the room was warm, flung the window open with such violence, as made all the panes vibrate again.

"Your tea is delicious, Mrs. Thornton; it does one good after a long journey," remarked Blight, endeavouring to look his most winning look, which was most repulsive; but Aunt Rachel forgave it readily, and answered even more pleasantly than was her wont to him: she began to think she had misjudged him, and blamed herself accordingly. Eve's large full eyes were fastened on the lawyer's face so steadily when he met them, that he looked quite confused, and shrunk from their contact as their fair owner had done from his touch an hour ago. "I'll watch him," they plainly said; "what is he after?"

"Will you not take a bed here, Mr. Blight, to-night?" asked Aunt Rachel.

Mr. Blight declined, with many thanks, declaring he must be up betimes in the morning, having to see about some property of the Doctor's, "which gave more trouble than it was worth." This he said smiling blandly, knowing the construction which would be put upon it.

The Doctor turned from the window where he had stood leaning out, and closing it, walked to the fire, and observed, "the wind was due East;" and, "yes, old fellow! you've had a confounded lot of trouble there, I'm sure; but you seem to have managed them after all."

"Oh yes; it is our profession to manage, Mrs. Thornton," turning again to her. The lawyer looked quite sanctified in his humility. "It is our profession to manage, dear Madam, and sometimes much against our inclination; but what must be done must be, you know, however hard to the feelings."

Soon after this Mr. Blight took his departure, "in body," but the essence of his being still remained, and had the full desired effect.

The Doctor, who had a way of treating his wife's opinion, in common with that of all women, with the greatest disdain, nevertheless applied to it sometimes in private, which he thought fit to do on the present occasion, Eve being only present beside the twain.

"He's a clever fellow!" was his remark, soon after the lawyer had taken leave.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Thornton, more warmly than usual.

"This is the letter; by-the-bye, I've a good mind to write it to-night. James was to go early in the morning to M ——, he might take it with him; it would reach him a post sooner."

"Have you? Is that the ——?" hesitated poor Aunt Rachel, who didn't know what to say for the best.

"Will you hold your confounded nonsense,

and hear it?" demanded the Doctor, whose irritability and excitement knew no bounds that night.

"Yes; I'll hear it," said Aunt Rachel, bridling up a little at her husband's rudeness.

"Then pay attention:"—

"DEAR RALPH,—You have thought proper to start for yourself in life; I wish you well. But as, in so doing, you have, without any provocation, severed every tie which affection could suggest or gratitude claim, you, no doubt, realize my own conviction, that henceforth your prosperity or adversity rests upon your own head; and that your natural protector has no more interest concerning you. Mr. Blight, my solicitor, will call upon you, as to the future settlement and management of your affairs.

I am,

Dear Ralph,

Your affectionate uncle,

THORNTON."

There was a dead silence. Mrs. Thornton's fingers plied rapidly at her needles, and Eve remained leaning back in the arm-chair, with her face buried in her handkerchief, in the same attitude she had fallen into soon after Blight had left.

"Well! what do you think of it?" asked the Doctor at length, who had risen from his seat and stood upon the hearth-rug, with his back to the fire.

"I think," stammered Aunt Rachel, "that —that—it would have been almost better for Mr. Blight to—to—go and explain how angry you are, and ——"

"Well, that's just what I wanted; just the plan I proposed," broke in the Doctor. "I wished to leave it in Blight's hands entirely. For him to write and say it was my wish for him to call, &c. But what the man says is quite right—'A lawyer's letter might do more harm than good to one of his stubborn temperament.' Not that I care a button what becomes of him. He's made his own bed and he must lie upon it, how-

ever hard it may be. But what Blight says is this, 'that he could not well take an active part in the affair without my sanction,' and he is of opinion that that ought to come direct from me."

"Well, perhaps he is right, my dear; but is not that letter a little too severe?"

"What d—d fools women are!" was the only reply the Doctor deigned to make, while a satirical smile curled his lip.

Aunt Rachel worked away nervously for a few minutes, and then ventured to observe, "Perhaps if there had been something in it —a very little, about your future—about forgiveness, if he prospered—or——"

"About old women's twaddle! you mean," concluded the Doctor; "you'd better be quiet, if you can only talk nonsense."

The knitting-needles progressed again rapidly, but they took up two more stitches than they ought to have done; and a large tear found its way into Eve's pocket-handkerchief; but she moved it not, nor did she

alter her position, until the Doctor, ringing, ordered a lamp to be taken into his study, that he might go and write the letter, the copy of which he had just read. Then she arose, and, saying she was tired, wished "Good night," and retired to her own room.

Joan looked searchingly at her young mistress, as when, after fastening up her long shining tresses for the night, she said, "Leave me now, dear Joan; I can manage very well, and shall not want you again to-night. Give me that warm shawl; I have some writing that I must finish before I go to bed."

It was nearly ten o'clock, and at this hour the Doctor liked "Sea View" shut up, and all its inhabitants to be seeking repose. So, old Joan, making up the fire—for it was a damp, cold night—begged Miss Ending "not to sit too long, for it was getting late;" and she put the guard on, with an anxious look at Eve's cheek, which was very pale, and an inward commentary upon Miss Lindsay's

manuscript, the writing out of which she feared injured her fair charge.

It was past midnight. Eve lay down, her large soft eyes wide open, and the reflection of the moon (it would steal into that chamber,) playing on her forehead. All was still at Sea View; not even the rolling of the waves was heard, for the night was calm, and the sea looked motionless. The only sound which broke the silence to Eve, was the ticking of the great clock upon the landing. More than an hour ago she had heard her uncle come up stairs to bed, and thought how late it was for him; he had called over the bannisters to the man-servant, who never retired to rest before his master, "That there were *three* letters for James to take in the morning, on the library table, and to mind he started early, for they were of consequence."

Eve had not closed her eyes since she had lain down, and now she rose gently into a sitting posture, and listened attentively. "No,—there is only the clock," she whis-

pered. "Am I doing right?" she asked herself, in the same tone. "I will pray God to guide me;" and getting out of bed, she knelt for some moments beside it. Then, putting on the warm shawl, and a large white dressing-gown over it, she moved noiselessly to the table, where lay a sealed letter she had been writing, and putting it between the folds in her bosom, and lighting a little taper, she opened her door, and crept stealthily down the stairs. She reached the library, and saw the three letters lying one upon another on the desk,—she approached, and by the small dim light she held, read the direction of the topmost; it was not the one she sought,—she raised it, and taking up the next, changed it with that which lay in her bosom, leaving the three piled as before. She then retraced her steps, stealing gently up the stairs. She trembled violently; her face was of an ashy whiteness, and her long wavy hair, escaping from its fastenings, hung dishevelled around her. Altogether, her appearance at such an hour,

in her long white robe, gliding so airily, was such as might have startled a cooler man than Dr. Thornton, who, hearing a stair creak, and having lain awake, puzzling and worrying himself, till he had become (although he would not have owned it) quite nervous, declared to his better-half, whom as usual he had rendered very uncomfortable, "that there were thieves in the house," and arose to light a candle, and appear very brave.

"My dear, I think it was only the wind."

"*Wind*, woman! As if the stairs blew *wind*. I tell you, I heard a noise on the stairs—do you understand plain English?"

While poor terrified Aunt Rachel answered in the affirmative, the Doctor, believing in his heart that it was Carlo, the dog, taking a night ramble, opened the chamber door, candle in hand.

Eve had just caused the creak on the stair, and with much presence of mind had blown her taper out instantly. She was within two or three yards of her own door.

She was conscious that some other door had been opened, but she closed her eyes and glided, truly like an apparition, into her room.

"Good God!" fell from the Doctor's lips, as he closed the door and bolted it, fairly sinking down into a chair.

"What is the matter, my love?" exclaimed Mrs. Thornton, greatly alarmed, but not attempting to leave her bed. She imagined that at least the Doctor had seen a dozen house-breakers. "Have you locked the door? Good gracious! Shall I set to ringing?" she continued, still under the bed-clothes; but, as the Doctor remained silent, which was a most extraordinary occurrence, she all at once supposed he might have been stabbed or severely injured during the instant he had stood at the door—"he could not have been shot, or she would have heard it, surely."

"My love, are you hurt?" she asked, with a beating heart, and half getting up in bed.

"Get me some water," gasped the Doctor, his frightened wife descending to the ground trembling all over.

"Are you hurt?—tell me, Thornton!"

"Will you get me some water?" repeated the Doctor, who really seemed to need it.

Mrs. Thornton's hand shook so much as she held the water to her husband's lips, that she gave his leg a little shower-bath, which seemed to revive him, for he said, "You fool, can't you hold it steady?—what are you shaking for?"

"My love, *is* there anybody in the house?" demanded the poor puzzled lady, who really began to think her husband was insane.

"Of course there is—are not you in it!" replied he, looking unusually pale.

"Then, my dear, are you ill? It must be your heart—a spasm, perhaps."

Thornton did not answer, but, closing his eyes, shivered.

"Do get into bed; how cold you are. Shall I ring for John to go for Doctor Meadows?"

"No, no! be quiet," said the Doctor, getting into bed. "Just tell me, if you remember, whether I took two Dover's-powder pills when I came up to-night, or not?"

"I think you did," replied the still much wondering Aunt Rachel.

"Then that's what it is! It's those d——d pills! If one don't sleep with 'em they play the devil with the nerves, and the sight, and everything else."

"Did you think you saw some one, then?" asked the good lady, beginning to shake again, and getting so close to the Doctor as caused him to push her rather rudely out of the way.

"Yes, I tell you, they will have that effect, especially where one is so confoundedly bothered as I am. I havn't slept them off. Did I speak before I got out of bed? I believe I was dreaming."

Mrs. Thornton assured him "that he had spoken, and most rationally—not as if he were dreaming, in the least;" but recollecting howvery nervous he had appeared, she

also satisfied herself that the worry he had had, and the opiate together, had acted upon his brain and caused some delusion. For some time they lay in silence, and Aunt Rachel, whose eyes were heavy for sleep, was just about giving herself up to slumber again, when the Doctor asked abruptly, "Does Eve ever walk in her sleep?"

Now, Aunt Rachel's mind had been fully bent upon the fancied form of a huge housebreaker, perhaps with crape over his face, which she imagined had appeared to the troubled vision of her spouse; and the question was so far from the matter of her thoughts, which were beginning to take refuge in a ridiculous dream of housebreakers, cold water, &c., that she, with a desperate effort to awake, jumbled the words "Eve," "walk," and "sleep," with the subjects of her fancy, and, in a drowsy voice, made some absurd reply.

"Don't you hear what I say? Does Eve walk in her sleep?" stormed the indignant Doctor.

"Walk in her sleep?" repeated poor Mrs. Thornton, now thoroughly roused. "Oh, dear! did you see her? I will ring the upstairs bell for Joan. Dear me, she must be ill!"

"I didn't say I saw her," remarked the Doctor, with the most aggravating indifference.

"But, my dear! do you mean that you thought it was she on the stairs? It couldn't be; she would never leave her room at such a time. It must have been the dog, or Joan, or some one. Unless she feels ill. Perhaps I'd better ring."

"You'd better go to sleep," observed the Doctor, contemptuously. "You women are all alike—jump at conclusions—pre-c-i-o-u-s as-se-s!"

Good Mrs. Thornton turned her back to her partner, freely allowing herself to consider him more than usually disagreeable. And he—he lay awake long after his worthy wife's mind had sunk to rest for a few brief hours. Yes, he lay staring on vacancy!

"She can snore well, poor simpleton, at all events!" he muttered, with a smile, as Mrs. Thornton's nasal accompaniment became oppressive.—What could he see, that his eyes remained so fixed? "It was not her face—no, nor her figure—it was too tall!" No, to his mind's eye, it had not been Eve Ending's face, nor yet her figure—but the face of one who had *pillowed on his breast* long, long years ago. Yes, in that brief glance he had seen *the mother in the child!*—

"Bother these Dovers! I'll get out of bed, and take a blue pill to counteract them."—It is of no use, Dr. Thornton! Man of the world—"*Novel hater!*"—Scoffer of the Poetry of Life—Sneerer at human feelings and affections! You are yourself the "hero" of a tragedy, whose deadly "Blight" is not surpassed by romance!—nor can it be overwrought by the pen of fiction.—It is still there—shadowy, yet real, before thee!—the form thou did'st once swear to love and cherish.—Toss again unto the other side; say, "Well, I've done more

than many; I've nothing to reproach myself with!"—and we will not be too hard upon thee, for thy fault is partly unknown to thee—the consequences of a blind and bitter error! Yes, that remembrance, from which thy soul shrinketh as beneath thy regard, even in retrospection, has been strangely awakened unto thee!—Thine is not an enviable frame of mind, to-night—money-getting and increasing power in position, and *much* in the estimation of the world, there are few poor labourers on the parent soil who would willingly change place with thee! Who would not, as to-morrow's sun rises in the heavens, rather go and toil on their "bodily" toil, with the "peace of mind" *thine* cannot know.—The Dover's pills are beginning to take effect at last; but the shadowy form clingeth still—of *her* who, not many miles away, reposes in a lonely hut on the cold sea-shore. Sleep, man, sleep!—but that sweet pale face will haunt thee still!

CHAPTER VIII.

"O'erwhelmed by doubt, and with delusion rife,
He seeks for truth and reads the Book of Life."

"THERE, now I'm sure I'm as upright as a dragoon!"

The speaker was Rose Lindsay. She was seated on the model throne in Ralph's studio, having her likeness taken. Her dress was rich and flowing, of blue moire antique, with a fall of Honiton lace round her snowy bosom, confined by a massive brooch. On either arm glittered a superb bracelet. Her hair was dressed in its usual style, forming a coronet round her small, beautifully shaped head; and from one side drooped on to the shoulder a spray (artificial, yet "like nature's own") of wild roses.

"Now, for Heaven's sake, keep still! Don't move the eyes," called the artist from his easel.

He turned to get a small brush, and then threw the same, with his palette, down upon the little table beside him, as if in despair. A hearty laugh broke forth from the throne, at last echoed by Ralph, who had tried hard to subdue it.

"What on earth's the use of coming to have your likeness taken, if, every time when I ask you to keep your face still, you make those horrible grimaces?" cried he, impatiently, his merriment subsiding, and taking up his palette again, with a scowl.

"There now, I won't tease you any more; but really, I imagine a *squint* would be *novel* in a portrait, and greatly astonish the weak nerves of the *novel haters*. Now, I'll sit, as I say, like a *red-coat*, only just give me a bit of that gingerbread first. Do you feed on gingerbread here in this dungeon-looking place, with the windows all shut up? Now,

don't look so cross; what are you going to have for dinner? Oxtail-soup, or real turtle?"

The scowl on the artist's brow dispersed as he handed the gingerbread to the merry girl, so fascinating in her merriment. "What a splendid creature she is!" thought he; and his eyes must have told to the full the purport of his thoughts, for Rose turned away her arch and rather wicked glance to the windows again.

"I really do feel like Daniel in the lion's den, with that streak of light coming down upon me. How dreary you must feel; only you're so peculiar."

"Am I?"

"Yes," answered she, settling herself into as graceful an attitude as can well be conceived. "May I talk?"

"Oh, yes," said Ralph; "your eyes look far more beautiful when they are animated."

"Well, then, talking of peculiarity puts me in mind of a little woman I met at Mrs.

H——'s the other evening. She had heard, by some chance or other, that I was writing a book: and after asking two or three absurd questions about composition, and whether I began by 'letter-writing,' &c., she told me, in a mysterious tone, that she was considered a most *peculiar character—most peculiar;* and she looked at me in what she meant to be a most impressive manner; but as one eye turns in and another turns out, I could not imbibe the required effect."

"And her nose sticking up in the air? I know who you mean," said Ralph, laughing.

"Don't make insulting remarks, Master Ralph; you hold your nose as high as anybody's. She can't help her personal defects, but she can help her false pride and presumption."

"What did you say to her? You're never going to make a character of her?" asked Ralph, who wanted Rose to continue her prattling while he got the expression of her eyes.

"No, boy; I think as her peculiarity consists in having a big bed, a big wardrobe, a big house, everything big about her, except her heart, which is not large enough to admit one of her brother's starving little children, it is, with herself, best left out altogether. I said nothing to her—how could I?—except to tell her I could not make 'a character' out of 'nothing;' for, poor little thing, she is one of those who will live and die a nonentity, whereas she might be 'as big and important to the mind,' as she is 'small and insignificant to the sight.'"

"Bravo!" exclaimed Ralph, "I've hit it capitally now?"

When the sitting was over, and Rose Lindsay, like a true queen, descended from the throne, and stood for a moment to witness the progress that had been made that morning, she said something, in her sparkling way, relative to the portrait, and then turned her eyes inquiringly to those of Ralph, who stood beside her, and she observed the same look in his towards herself which had caused

her to withdraw hers rather suddenly before; she did so again now, and in some confusion, and then hastily saying she must change her dress quickly, for the brougham was waiting, she passed rather haughtily through the folding doors into Ralph's chamber. Perhaps her manner would have shown even greater offence had she heard the artist mutter, "She's a splendid, a brilliant creature!" and then shrugging his shoulders he sneered, "These confounded conformities to the world! People prate of nature, bah! and the fools are the first to quench it. The brute has no curb put upon his inclination; he's better off than the two-legged animal!"

When Miss Lindsay appeared ready equipped for her drive homeward, she had regained her lighter mood, which she seemed to think it better to maintain. While putting on her bonnet she had thought about *that look* which had so annoyed her, and blamed herself rather for her indiscretion in coming to be with Ralph, time after time,

alone, after what had taken place between them in his old study at Doverton.

"I'll get mamma to come with me next time—although I thought he'd forgotten all about it, and I am sure I had till now," were her thoughts as she tied her bonnet-strings; and, blushing deeply, she murmured, "I hope he won't say anything about it again."

On that point Rose might have rested perfectly satisfied, for wives and wedlock were altogether foreign to the artist's mind just then. Now gay and volatile as, in the buoyancy of her spirit, Miss Lindsay may appear to many of our readers, there are those among them who will trace the vein of deep and noble feeling flowing within. Hers is a character we love. How can we help it, when we feel, act, and say all in accordance with her, as in the blind pathway of human life, she did what *seemed the best!* She had gone, in the first warm impulse of a generous heart, to help where she considered help was needed; but now, so keen a conception had she of right and

wrong, and so much did she shrink from contact with the latter, that she almost persuaded herself that her heedlessness had merited insult. "Yet he cannot mean to renew the subject—I shall treat it as though I saw it not," was her determination, as, re-entering the studio and holding out her hand, she wished Ralph good-bye, in a gay tone and with a mock curtsey.

"Now, mind you're all ready for my Highness at eleven o'clock, the morning after next (Thursday) brushes, palette, throne, and all!"

There was a strange, perplexed look in Ralph's face as she laughingly moved towards the door; it amounted almost to distraction as, passing the little table, she held up a piece of the gingerbread, and advised him as "the best thing he could do then, to set to and eat it all up." He would much rather have seen her stately and drawn up in dignity as she had been when she left him than in that "mood of irony," as it appeared to him in his present reckless condition of uncontrolled

feeling. But he judged wrongfully; there was no lurking irony in Rose Lindsay's words; she had not judged him correctly, but she had given him far more credit than he deserved. Innocently enough she began to imagine that he really loved her—with sorrow, too, for she never could return his love; whereas the feeling that had stirred the painter's bosom was far below any such standard; it was a "creature" feeling, it had nothing in it of "love or heaven," it was of the earth, earthy—the breath of passion which fanned the clay.

Long after she had gone, he went on touching up her representation mechanically, with a frowning brow, as though he heeded not what his hand effected. Gradually he left the face and figure, and his attention seemed wholly absorbed in a large tree which formed part of the background, and which he was taking from fancy. Truly, almost imperceptibly, it gained an aspect like life—the very leaves seemed to yield to the power of his brush, and spread in clus-

ters of themselves, as though they were sent from some far-off beauteous garden, and had just drank the morning's early dew, so refreshing were they in their green coolness—their verdant shade. Whether the "work of his hand" brought a draft of holier feeling to the artist's spirit, or whether he coupled in his mind's eye that tree with aught else in his past life, we cannot tell; but his countenance grew calmer—his brow relaxed, and when, at length, he sat down to contemplate the day's task, we may guess a little what had been the course of his long reflection, for he said, slowly and deliberately, "Ah, well! I shall never be like *him!*"

Who that "him" implied, perhaps the reader will not be at much loss to imagine. But now, taking the canvas from the easel, he placed it by the side of another, with its face to the wall like that. We suppose we must take the liberty allowed our order, and peep in front of the latter. It was also a portrait. And no one could hesitate of

whom. The face was that of Eve Ending, but the subject was an angel just about to leave this world of toil and sin for one which seemed her "far fitter abode." Her wings were of silver, and the cloud opening above her did ample justice to the perception of frail man.

Ralph sat down upon his throne, and buried his face in his hands. Presently he raised it, and muttered "Yes; seven shillings an hour seems a good deal; but they say I can't get a good female model under. Then there's that Hinton — he'll make a splendid Disciple—and that little child too." He was pondering the subject he had pondered incessantly ever since his arrival in Newman Street, the work of his first "great picture," his *chef-d'œuvre* —"Christ's Sermon on the Mount."

"Yes; the Mount I will have *beautiful* —all that Morley even could wish. I will let my fancy take her range. I will give my talent scope—shrubs, flowers—ah! all that is *easy*, delightful to the senses—*no*

task; but the—the—the great—*the Hero* of the tale — that's the stumbling-stone — the—" He paused, and then continued in a voice barely a whisper, "Well, I must take his advice. I don't mind taking *his.* But how ridiculous it seems to go and ask for *a Bible!* The people will think I'm mad. I'll leave it till after dark—and then——"

"Here's your washing, sir!" exclaimed Dorothy from the door-way. She entered abruptly, and put down the basket, containing shirts, stockings, &c., before the eyes of the astonished Ralph, who was literally startled out of his meditations, and seemingly in a manner he by no means admired, to judge by his lowering brow, as he answered,—

"What in the world do you bring the things here for—take them into the bedroom."

"Woman wants her money—five shillings and eightpence;" replied the imperturbable Dorothy.

"Take it to her and be d—— !" was the

not very gentlemanly answer of the washer-woman's creditor.

Some minutes after, when Ralph went into his chamber to attend to his toilet before sitting down to his solitary dinner—(for there was not a more "thorough gentleman" in these points than Ralph Thornton; he studied etiquette when alone as much as though he were about to sit down with two princes of the blood)—lo! and behold! his clothes were nowhere to be found! He looked on the bed, where he naturally expected to find them; he then opened his drawers — his linen-drawer—(be charitable, courteous reader, over the wardrobe of a young uninitiated bachelor), he had not *many* shirts, but all he had, had disappeared!

He rang the bell somewhat violently. No answer! He rang it again; and Dorothy, after a few minutes, made her appearance with much gravity.

"Where the d——l have you put all the linen?"

"You've only got five day-shirts — one

dirty, one on, three come home—all want mending."

"Well, but what have you done with them?" asked Ralph, in a milder tone, beginning to conceive the reason of the absence of his apparel.

"I haven't *eaten* them."

"But I want one of them!"

"You shall have it, with common patience;" and Dorothy disappeared as speedily as she had entered.

Ralph waited with as much "common patience" as he could muster for about ten minutes, when the shirt arrived, with two new buttons sewed on, for which benevolence he thanked "that strange animal," as he called (and perhaps not without reason) the niece of Mrs. Bounce.

And now it was after dark; the gas-lights flickered in the streets; poor wretched work-girls wended their way to their miserable lodgings, or to the haunts of vice; some few shops were closing, but for the most part they were lit up and gay; various passen-

gers walked along the footpath, some quick and bustling in animated discourse, others with steps weary, and voices low. The artist appears walking stealthily, his hat drawn over his eyes, as though ashamed of his mission. Poor fool! he may well be ashamed that he has not sent himself on the same errand before! What does he seek? He stops now before a bookstall and asks hurriedly "If they've got an *old Bible* there?"

To the answer in the negative, he looks blank and disconcerted. He must go into a shop for one, much as he shrinks from so doing. He stands outside looking at the covers for a long while; some are marked very cheap. He is surprised! he thinks if it was "worth anything" it ought to be more. "Dear me! it ought to be worth *pounds* instead of *shillings*." He thought only of the "meat which perisheth."

See him now, as he hies towards his home hastily (he has rushed in and demanded the book so eagerly, that the young woman behind the counter stares at him in amaze-

ment). He has got it in his coat-pocket, and he feels as if he had done some disgraceful thing; or, more truly, that such disgrace attends him for not possessing that "Book of books" before. But he hurries on his way into his own quiet domicile, where few come to disturb him; and, turning the gas a little higher, he stretches himself full length upon his back on the model throne, and turns the pages for a long while before his unaccustomed eyes find what they seek—"Christ's Sermon on the Mount."

Nobody in that house had known of his going out or coming in, for in common with others of the like description, the inmates and those accustomed to its ingress admitted themselves. Therefore, when Dorothy brought up the tea-tray and found him thus employed, with the Bible held up before him, she stared in amazement. As he lay backwards to the door, he had not perceived her entrance till she placed the tray upon the table, for he was much absorbed in the subject before him. He pushed the book quickly behind

the large screen on the throne, as she asked, in her usual pert manner, "Make it for you?"

"No; leave it," was Ralph's laconic answer.

"Well, you've got a curiosity in that artist chap," was the remark of the irritated Dorothy to her Aunt Bounce. "When I entered his room just now, he lay sprawling on his model-place reading his Bible. It's my belief he's melancholy mad."

"It's genius, my girl—genius, genius!" replied Mrs. Bounce, emphatically.

"Well, I'm glad I haven't got his genius, that's all. I should never be surprised at anything it made him do: he'll take a rum start some day, I'll be bound!"

Now, the subject which had so much engrossed Ralph's attention was not our Saviour's discourse on the Mount—he had not found that; but in turning the leaves at random—for he knew not in what part to seek what he required—he had been struck with a passage which did verily answer his inmost thoughts. He had hardly been con-

scious of the "still small voice" which had spoken, or of the response that he had, as usual, given. The voice had said, "How dreadful to have lived all these years without a 'guide of life!'" and "How is it that you look upon *this* as a disgrace, which others value as their *truest friend?*" And his response had been "Why am I made to feel this,—why was I made as I am?" And the passage which had struck his vision and arrested his search was this: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction."

"Humph! then I suppose I am 'fitted to destruction;' then what on earth's the use of doing anything to save myself?"

But he read a little further, and on this

latter part he meditated long: "I will call them my people which were not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God."

It was at this point that he had pushed his Bible behind the screen, not however without turning the leaf down, and he rose and poured out a cup of tea, and while he drank it he pondered upon what he had read, and owned to himself that "there was something wonderful, at least, in a book answering one's thoughts in that way." And then he resumed his former attitude, and still reflected for some minutes before taking up his Bible again; and the matter of his reflection was as follows: "How is it possible to become what *one is not?* Morley says 'we can change;' I don't see how, unless the Being that made us changes us. Morley would say, 'He will, if we pray for it;' but how's one to pray who hasn't the spirit of prayer in him? He talks about '*faith*,' but how is

one to *make oneself believe?* And even if I did believe and could pray, I'm sure I shouldn't know what to say; there are no words could say what I meant, and as to saying a lot of stuff written by another man, that's humbug! he could never tell my wants—I should question if he could his own, even. I don't see *what is to save* a poor doomed wretch."

He took up his book, and idly turned a page back from where he had been reading. He could hardly repress an exclamation of surprise as these verses met his vision, and relieved his difficulty. They are in the 8th chapter of Romans: "For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." And he went on to the

end of this most beautiful chapter, and gave a very heavy sigh when he had finished it; and, to judge by his countenance, the sigh was more of relief than of burden.

And now, after his long search, he has discovered his object, but he has not turned to the commencement of the sermon, and the first words that meet his eyes are these: "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." It is painful for us to relate that here Ralph threw the Bible impatiently from him, muttering, "Faugh! ridiculous rubbish!" but we are giving the statement of a true character, and wish faithfully to record the struggle in the student's mind at that time. Why did the colour mount into his cheek? there was no eye beholding him,—no *human* eye. Is it possible he could have thought of the All-seeing One viewing his irreverent action? or did he admit the conviction that that same Eye had seen his looks that morning?—seen and understood their import?" He knew

not, but the red blood rose even to his forehead. It might have been with anger,—he was not given to blushing; or it might have been with shame; perchance he felt both. Any one to have watched him at that moment would have surmised that he did so. Anger, however, seemed predominant, for the Bible remained where he had thrown it; while he, partly rising from his recumbent posture, pulled a cigar from his pocket, lit it, and began to puff vigorously, knitting his brows the while till they well-nigh met.

Just then, Dorothy entered, and handed him a letter; her habitual leer augmented till the whites of her eyes were alone visible: "Ought to have had it more than a week ago—no number on it—taken to 18—gentleman out—housekeeper took it in—" said she.

"But why in the world didn't they send it on here, when they found it was not for them? Is the name similar to mine? Really the postman ought to be discharged, if he makes such mistakes." Ralph uttered

these words angrily, for he saw the handwriting was Eve Ending's.

"The lady should have put the number," said Dorothy, more rudely even than usual.

"How could she put it, if she didn't know it?—none of your impudence!" stormed the artist. "The postman isn't fit for his office, if he leaves letters at wrong houses."

"Gentleman's name (and he *is* a gentleman)—Thorn*hill*," coolly remarked Dorothy, clearing away the coffee appurtenances; "the letter wouldn't have reached you now, if it hadn't been for me. Nobody knows *you* here," and she banged the door after her.

"Nobody knows *me*," repeated Ralph, his eye flashing; the words grated on his ear, and fell like ice-bolts on his mind's cravings. "But the time shall come when *everybody* shall know me. I will be no longer *nothing*." He glanced at his large canvas, with a beating heart, and then at the Bible he had thrown from him, and then

with an unsteady hand he opened the letter he held, and read:—

"My dear Ralph,—You do not know what trouble we have felt here concerning you. Uncle, as I daresay Mr. Morley told you, was very angry when he first heard of the step you have taken; but I am quite sure, dear Ralph, he will relent and quite forgive you, if you only write and acknowledge your error (for you must admit that you did not at least act considerately), when you remember how good uncle has always been to you. Indeed, dear Ralph, he has done by you as though you were his own child. I am going to tell you a little secret, which perhaps I ought not to reveal, only I think it will make you feel kinder towards uncle, and forget his 'failings,' of which all have a share, in dwelling upon his 'deeds of goodness.' Aunt Rachel told me once, Ralph, that uncle has never touched a farthing of the property his brother left for you; but that what was to have been spent on your educa-

tion, &c., has been put by to increase for you, that you might come into more when you are of age. Is not that real kindness? Oh! dear Ralph, I am sure he loves you. I think I see you smile at the idea; but, indeed, people do not all show their love alike, and I don't think you have any idea what love there is at Sea View for you. Oh, do write! that we may all be happy again. I hope you have not forgotten our nice cosy chats in your old study, now that you have got into such a fine one. I think of them often, and pray earnestly for you, dear Ralph. You had better not write to me, because no one knows I have written this; but do write and apologize to uncle. Do, for *my* sake, Ralph; you will make all happy then, and I think yourself too. It is getting late, so, good night; and hoping you will grant my request,

I remain,

Your ever affectionate

EVE ENDING."

For some moments after perusing the above, the artist held it open before him; his eyes were riveted on the one line,—"What love there is at Sea View for you." Now, he had been with Eve from his childhood, as the reader knows; she had often previously made a similar speech, and it had passed unheeded by him who now noted the purport of it so keenly, tracing a meaning which, perhaps, the fair writer did not intend to impart; but an angel might have nourished the feelings contending in his breast concerning her. Still, he did not so entirely couple silver wings and a floating cloud with the writer of that little note (crossed so neatly) as he had always done before. In the mirror of his memory, he no longer saw her caught up by bright spirits from a world whose touch he had deemed contaminated her spotless nature; nay, he rather regarded her as a "Sister of Mercy," and even went so far as to picture her a "happy, beloved wife and mother." Strange that things repeated should look so differently penned on

paper and underlined. "*I don't think you have any idea what love there is at Sea View for you!*" He, who a few moments ago believed himself unknown, unloved, unblest, now felt himself a very king in his rich treasury of affection. The most callous reader will allow that there was balm in such words, addressed to one of his nature, in his solitary condition. And there are many who will also perceive how such words wrought the effect we have endeavoured to describe. Yes, they will understand better than any pen can teach them, the revolution in the student's soul. And gladly now, and cheerfully, he turned to the "Mount" again; but before he could give his attention to that which called so kindly and mercifully for it, he made up his mind that he would "do as Eve wished." Yes, to-morrow he would do so; Rose Lindsay did not come till the next day, and he should have time to write to the Doctor. It was miserably humiliating, but do it he would. Alas! "Man proposes," is an old proverb. But his mind was soothed

and his spirit calmed; and, giving himself up to the study for his "great work," he read, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!"

CHAPTER IX.

"Man talks of glory and renown—
More famed is he who's striven
For peace, the glory of his God—
His witness is in Heaven!"

"Before the 'Blight' came, 'twas a 'Bud of promise.'"

"Men of the world, ye in whose vaunted power
Creatures of frailer mould are weakly laid,
Boast not thy claim, but freely curse the hour
It on such hearth the same sad wreck has made."

EARLY morning found Ralph hard at his work—the design of his cherished labour—his "master-piece"—"The Sermon on the Mount." He thought he would leave the letter till the afterpart of the day—the evening, perhaps; for he studied hard till his dinner-hour, and not unfrequently after-

wards, by gas-light. The plan he had conceived for this great work was very good. The picture being one entirely of fancy, he had permitted his ideas to range free. The mount was to be adorned with Eastern shrubs and flowers, and the representation of these would cost much time and labour, let alone the expense and difficulty of procuring some few, for their correct resemblance. But Ralph did not consider this any obstacle; his imagination was such that he feared not to depict the scenes of other lands, animate or inanimate. He had decided the group that should be just around our Saviour, on the top of the mount, with the many followers wending their way up the steep side in the distance. And he had engaged models, male and female, for his project — their various attitudes he was now considering; some should be kneeling, some reclining on the sward, while others stood; all devoutly and wonderingly listening to the Divine doctrine—the words of salvation and of life. A little cluster of children

should be gathered close to the skirt of the Redeemer's clothing—some looking up into his face, with the dawning intellect and eagerness of childhood; others, less mindful, should be busy with the flowery sod. In all, the conception was grand and appealing in its simplicity. But the chief difficulty at present in the mind of the student was how to portray the Redeemer Himself. He would have nothing borrowed —he would have such a face and figure as no artist living or dead had yet conceived; he would pour into it all the power of eloquence—all the force of conviction; yet did he ever remember, it must be replete with "mercy;" and how to combine all this, the earthly with the heavenly, was his hourly embarrassment, and he was disturbed with notions doubtful and intricate, as he stood there before his large canvas on that chilly morning, brush in hand.

About eleven o'clock there was a sharp knock at the door of the studio; and upon Ralph's saying "Come in," the door opened

and admitted, much to his surprise, and we may add disgust, Mr. Blight.

"I must apologize for coming up unannounced," said the lawyer, humbly, bowing lowly the while; "I hope I have not disturbed you; but having knocked twice, I presumed the people of the house were engaged in their domestic callings; and finding the handle of the door merely required turning, I took the liberty of letting myself in, and found my way up here, where I saw your name on your door."

During this speech Blight had held out his hand; but the other (let his faults be what they might) did not, at any rate, class deceit among their number. He drew back with an undisguised air of scorn. They had not shaken hands for many a day, and Ralph could not understand why they should do so now. There had been a tacit feeling of dislike and ill-will between them, which had existed, more or less, from his earliest recollection; and of late that feeling had most certainly ripened into hatred on his

side; and he conjectured, and rightly, that there was no love lost upon the other. He did not even ask his visitor to be seated, but, in a stern, cold voice, demanded the reason of this visit, although, in his heart, he divined its import, and had even expected it before.

To Blight's reply, still in the same plausible voice, that he supposed he was expected, Ralph deigned no other notice than a haughty bend of his head.

The lawyer then proceeded to state what the reader already knows—the "wishes of the Doctor concerning his nephew's affairs" —that they should henceforth be conducted solely by him (Blight).

Ralph listened attentively. Had he received his uncle's letter, he would have been prepared for this. As it was, strange to say, he did not feel inclined to give full credit to the remarks of the lawyer upon the Doctor's determination; and the lawyer, of course, supposing that he had read "that determination," in his uncle's own hand-

writing, enlarged upon the theme in his own wily way, and concluded by inferring, that the case appeared to him "rather unjust;" but that his opinion was, it had all happened for the best, &c., as Ralph could now be his own entire master, and that he (Blight) would guard the property implicitly. "He had made the most thorough investigation," he added, not without due observation of the cloud gathering on the artist's brow; "he had considered every point for advantage," he hurried his harangue a little as the cloud grew darker; "and he considered that the heir was fully entitled to an allowance of £100 a year until he should become of age."

We have said that at first Ralph felt indisposed to believe that his uncle had actually refused to have anything more to do with him, simply because he had acted without his sanction; but, as the man of law proceeded, he became convinced that he had received authority to say what he had now said, and to act in the manner he had acted, regarding his affairs.

Drawing himself up, Ralph, with a quivering lip, remarked, "That as he was his own master, he should most certainly select his own solicitor."

"Let me remind you," pleaded Blight, in no way moved, "that you are yet a minor."

"I am perfectly aware of that fact," retorted Ralph, with a flashing eye, "and the more do I stand in need of a worthy legal protector."

There was no mistaking the mutual aversion in which they held each other at that moment; but, while the artist looked down upon the lawyer with the most bitter contempt, as upon the grovelling insect whose nature he partook, the lawyer raised his small glaring eyes to those of the other with an expression in them of malignant treachery. He, nevertheless, suppressed any sign of resentment, as he answered in the same smooth tones he had used throughout the interview,—

"You are quite right, perfectly right, Mr. Ralph; you ought to feel the strictest

confidence and reliance. Will you communicate with your uncle on the subject? If you should change your opinion, I shall be always ready for your service, and happy to do all in my power for the benefit of the property."

Ralph remained silent while this crafty speech was made, but he had never once removed his stern gaze from the speaker's countenance, who would have quailed beneath it had there been one grain of honest feeling left within his breast. As it was, he tried hard for a smile, and he produced one of a sardonic nature, which enraged Ralph beyond the power of endurance.

"Change my opinion of *you!* Never! As it is, so it has always been, *and so it will ever be.* I shall employ a solicitor immediately; and you touch one farthing of my money or interfere in any way with my concerns at your peril!"

Blight's face looked ghastly now; nevertheless, he still restrained his wrath—by a mighty effort he put it by, locking it up in

his stony heart that it might reap interest for another day.

"You're rather high, Mr. Ralph Thornton," he said, with provoking coolness, "and forgetful of circumstances; also needlessly angry." Here he tried to smile again.

"Forgetful of circumstances!" burst forth Ralph. "What circumstances concerning *me* can have anything to do with *you*? What do you mean? The fact is, that dolt of an uncle of mine, with all his cleverness, is regularly taken in by you. You've been raised out of your proper place, and you presume upon it, sir! Have the goodness to remember *who I am*, and don't talk to me of circumstances!"

"Our circumstances may not lie so widely apart, some day," observed Blight, with a livid cheek and lip to match: he was determined to sting his antagonist to the quick now.

"What the devil do you mean?" cried Ralph, furiously.

"You remind me of the good Doctor," began Blight, with his smile again.

"Never mind who I remind you of; just say what you mean, if you can, and then be off."

"I mean, then, that should *my sweet Eve* ——"

He had hardly got that name from his lips, before he was obliged to make a sudden leap, in order to parry the blow aimed at his head by the clenched fist of Ralph Thornton. It was well it was avoided, perhaps, for both parties; and yet, who knows? for the string of trifles, threaded differently, might have led to less direful results. Ralph did not aim again, though the other seemed to think it by no means improbable that he would; and, gaining the door speedily, he stood upon the threshold on the defensive, regarding the inmate very much in the same manner as a keeper would some savage, hungry beast.

"You dare mention that name with your own! you allude to—to—" Ralph could hardly articulate for passion.

"I should not have done so had you not

desired it, and pardon me if I say your behaviour is most uncalled for."

"Don't talk to me of pardon, man! don't play the hypocrite any longer! I'm not afraid of showing you my hatred; why are you afraid of showing yours?"

"*The time may come when I shall not be!*" These words were uttered in a deep, low tone, very different to that maintained by the lawyer hitherto, and as the door closed upon them, a cold chill ran through the artist's frame. He shivered, and muttering "Dastardly villain!" he went to a closet, and, pouring out a glass of wine, drained it; but it did not warm him: he stood again before the "Mount," but the bright flow of the soul's poetry had ceased; it was dried up; he could no longer combine the materials of the natural and moral world. The rich power of conception and the energy of imagination were, for the time, rudely destroyed. He put the canvas away, for that day, in despair, and sat down, in a whirlwind of burning thought. For more

than an hour he remained in the same position, with his arms on the table, and his face buried in his hands. More than once he stamped his foot, as though he could hardly bear the subject of his brooding, and once he said aloud, striking the table violently, "He shall never have her! Fool! idiot that I have been!" Some time elapsed, and the heavy, agitated breathing was all that denoted the presence of the student. At last, rising hastily, he paced the room, repeating, "No—he shall never have her! I would prevent it, were *my own life the sacrifice.*" He turned, and started at seeing Dorothy close beside him.

"How do you dare enter my room without knocking?" he asked, with a most forbidding frown.

"Did knock—so busy talking, didn't hear me."

"I don't believe you did; another time I'll thank you to stop till I give you leave to enter. Suppose a model—Hinton, for instance—was lying upon that throne, stark

naked as he was born, how would you have liked that?"

"Jumped out as soon as I jumped in," was Dorothy's reply; and, by no means disconcerted, she continued, "Mrs. Bounce sent me to see if you want any lunch—haven't rung for any."

"Yes—bring it up directly," answered Ralph, greatly annoyed at having had his soliloquy overheard.

"Bread and cheese?"

"Yes, bread and cheese—and be quick; I expect a model at half-past two. I'll have that door altered, if I can. It opens too softly. One can't be always locking and unlocking," observed Ralph to himself. —It is a strange fact how, by living alone, one gets to put their thoughts into words, as though some airy spirit heard and coincided with them. . . . .

"That artist chap makes me crawl!" exclaimed Dorothy, banging her aunt's crockery about unmercifully.

"Why, my love? you will never com-

prehend 'genius,' I fear. The acts of genius are unaccountable."

"So I should think, aunt."

"What did he say, child?"

"Why, he's talking about sacrificing his life, or such some stuff, and stalking about his studio like mad."

"Well, child, he is comprehending the complication of some grand idea, or ——"

"Just put the cheese this way; I've got the third floor's dinner to take." And away flew Dorothy.

It was lucky for Ralph that he was engaged for two hours with a model that afternoon. He could copy; the employment was a recreation to him, and dissipated his thoughts. The power of creating was for the time dispelled. The evening came, and the effect of "Blight" that morning was proved yet stronger. There was no letter written. The little one he had received the night before still lay in his waistcoat-pocket; he took it out, read it, kissed it, and put it

in again. "But to write to *him*, to that unnatural uncle," thought he, "No! Eve would not wish it, if she knew how he had acted; and, perhaps, by this time she did. Would she write again? No, she would not like to; her letter had been so long unanswered in the way she *had wished it answered.* She had told him not to write to her. He would obey her; he feared to get her into trouble, or he would have run the risk of her displeasure on that point, that he might have warned her of that he shrank from naming. He would think of her—he would bless her, and so, as he knew she would have him do, he would go to church next Sunday, and lay by so much a week for charity." And then the channel of his thoughts flowed to his own immediate concerns. "He must employ a solicitor immediately; it was not likely his uncle would raise any objection to his selecting his own, now that he had cast him off for ever. He would ask Miss Lindsay to-morrow about her uncle's solicitor; he had heard her say

that the General had once given it as his opinion that "Mr. Honourly was one of the few lawyers who were not thieves." And then when the day closed, and it was yet not dark enough to light the gas, but that sort of half-light we have in early winter, he locked his door, so as finally to exclude the intrusion of the caustic Dorothy, and seating himself on the rug, in front of the bright blaze, he opened his "Book," and he soon arrived at the conclusion of the "Sermon on the Mount," and the words fell very healing to his chafed and wounded spirit—"*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, but it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.*" The more healing they were, as he called to mind what Morley had read, so expressively, one Sunday evening when they were travelling, and which had often returned to his memory since—"*In God is my salvation and*

my glory; the rock of my strength and my refuge is in God."

When Rose Lindsay came the following morning (alone, for her mamma was not well enough to accompany her) she found the artist touching up her portrait, and all prepared ready for her sitting. She thought she could perceive a slightly confused look in Ralph's face, as he greeted her; they exchanged a few commonplace remarks, and then she went into his chamber, as usual, to prepare her dress. He had not mentioned the lawyer's visit of yesterday, nor did he intend to do so; naturally reserved, that late occurrence, together with the little paper by his heart, had caused him to shut himself more completely within himself, and to shun the perception of another. That morning he had been about the tree we spoke of, in the background of Rose Lindsay's picture—the tree which had awakened in his breast the spell of "memory" of "affection" for his brother-man, and, we may add, the "dawn of a finer feeling" towards his Maker. With

that spell upon him he had worked with an "inspired hand;" but a few short hours had wrought a wondrous change, and turned the subdued and balmy influence into one of turbulence—the calm flow of sentiment into the tempestuous stream of outraged feeling. And the eye which the day before had been soul-lit with enthusiasm, now gazed upon the rich foliage it had given birth to, in cold apathy—dull, and careworn.

"You seem out of spirits, good artist," said Rose, before mounting the throne, where Ralph was placing her chair. "I'm afraid you're moping here."

Ralph laughed a forced laugh, and said he did not feel very well.

"Why, gracious me!" exclaimed Miss Lindsay, suddenly, "the top part of that tree is beautiful; but does not the lower branch look *blighted?*"

The artist laughed again, and there was a choking sensation in his throat. It *was blighted*, and so had been his good intentions. . . . .

Weeks passed away, and nothing worthy of record transpired. Miss Lindsay's portrait was finished, and sent down by express command to Teevesdale Park, and Ralph received eight £10 bank notes in exchange. Mrs. Lindsay had wished for the picture, but a certain young gentleman, having seen it at the studio, had given such a description of it to the General, that nothing would do but he must have it forthwith. And the young gentleman in question used to walk every evening across the park, in order that he might sit awhile regarding it, while pretending to be much interested in the gossip of the two old gentlemen, General Lindsay and his father, Sir Edward Morley. But this young gentleman had been summoned up to town to attend the christening of his sister's son and heir, that he might take upon him his young namesake's sins, and make him a present of a knife and fork and spoon. He met Miss Lindsay at this important assembly, and was grieved to find that the constraint in her

manner towards himself had in no wise diminished. It troubled him the more because he partly divined its cause. The Lady de Vere had remained at Morley Court for some short time after his return from abroad, and Gertrude had not failed to do all in her power to bring about a match on which she had set her heart. That she was defeated in her purpose the reader will doubtless imagine; but through her presuming interference a difference (and perhaps the first of any consequence that had ever occurred) had ensued between Ernest and his father.

The Lady de Vere had left the Court, stung by the coolness of the man she certainly loved. There are few women, or men either, who could help loving Ernest Morley. Affairs, however, had gained a more kindly aspect at Morley Court. The Baronet had ascertained in a roundabout way, from the old General's own lips, that the whole of the property of the latter, which was very large, was to be bequeathed to his niece; and

Lady Morley never let a night pass without, in the seclusion of their own apartment, urging her beloved son's happiness. By degrees the baronet's heart softened to her constant appeals; although that tale of the General's relative to the factory girl, which perhaps the reader may remember, haunted him a good deal, and determined him, if anything should take place between the young people, to warn the good old soldier against betraying "his plebeian blood." So Ernest and his father had become friends again, without a word having passed between them regarding Miss Lindsay; but the son understood well how the case stood, and knew the mother's kind voice had been raised in his behalf. Not so thoroughly did he understand how matters were between Rose and himself. One circumstance he knew and deplored, that he had seen several letters written by Gertrude, directed to that young lady; and he was sufficiently aware of his sister's frivolous nature to suppose the chief tendency of their contents. He

imagined, and rightly, that Miss Lindsay considered him "engaged," but he did not know that it was her great love for him which caused the blood to rush from her heart when he addressed her, and made her words so few and concise. He could not tell either why she should prefer a tall, miserable-looking young man (whom she had never seen before) to conduct her out of the church after the christening, when he had had the honour, conferred on him by his sister, to lead her in.

He had made up his mind, as she stood by the font so bride-like in her white lace bonnet and dress of lavender silk, to explain to her, before they parted that evening, how she had been deceived; but the action we have related chilled his purpose and sent a thrill (something like jealousy) through his heart. So, for the remainder of the evening the coolness and misunderstanding were quite equal between them; and they parted as they had met. Cupid plays cruel pranks: he kept four eyes open nearly all that night.

"Well, my boy, how are you?" cried Morley, as he entered Ralph's studio, just as the pale student had finished breakfasting. The pale face flushed and the eye glistened, as it always did at sight of the new comer.

Ralph had to go that morning in search of a model he had heard of, and his errand would lead him into some of the back, bad parts of London. He urged this against his friend's desire to accompany him; but Morley grew indignant, asking, "Did the artist think he was too proud to mingle with any of his race? Did *he*, too, misunderstand him?"

Now, Ralph was not quick in noting another's state of mind; but he regarded his friend with a different eye to that which he cast on others, and he very soon discovered that something had happened to annoy that good and generous heart; and, after they had proceeded some distance on their way, he pressed the arm he held, and asked (quite lovingly for him), "If aught had vexed Ernest Morley?"

The latter hesitated at first, but soon frankly owned the cause of his perplexity.

Ralph listened in astonishment; he had no idea of Morley's feelings towards Rose Lindsay; he was aware that he admired her, as everybody did, but he was quite touched now by the free and open account his friend gave of the love he had borne her for years, and how he feared, somehow, that it was not returned.

There is an old adage, the refined translation of which is, "talk of an angel, he'll clap his wings." There certainly appears to be truth in it at divers seasons: surely it happened so upon the present occasion, for the animated discourse of the two friends had drawn gradually to the affair, very dimly circulated, between the lady who had such strong hold of Morley's heart, and Captain Riggin, when who should appear before them but that gentleman himself. Now Ralph had never seen the Captain before, and all he had heard of him had been in anecdotes related, we must own, with much

satire, by the "Rose" who had caused the above controversy, and therefore had he strongly opposed what Morley had opined—that she was betrothed to that individual, feeling sure that no young lady in love would so caricature her *innamorato*. Let it not be supposed that Ernest believed Rose to be in love with Captain Riggin, for something in his heart told him very differently; but the truth was, he was bewildered, and knew not what to think. He felt by no means pleased at this interruption to the conversation, and was less so when, after introducing the Captain to Ralph, the former linked his arm in his and wended his way with the twain.

"We are going into a most uncivilized vicinity—one, I think, that you will hardly relish," said he, regarding rather contemptuously the shiny boots and exceedingly dandified apparel of the Captain.

"Oh, oh! never fear! I am thinking of going out to India shortly, and shall have to go into strange vicinities there—aha! ha! It's a wonder to me how many of our young

fellows can resist going to show their valour; there's a grand opening for it!"

The trio proceeded and soon issued into, verily, a most suspicious-looking vicinity. Men, with long beards and ferocious countenances; women, with large borders to their caps, and screaming children in their arms—little wretches, brawling in the dirt, looking as though water had never reached them; while young boys and young girls polluted the air with their coarse oaths and indecent mirth,—made up the society of which it consisted.

"O God! look there." It was Ernest Morley who spoke; the cries and loud wailing of a child had attracted the attention of the three gentlemen, as well as that of the denizens of this miserable neighbourhood. The child's agony was produced by repeated blows inflicted on her head and neck by a woman who followed her, and of whom she ever and anon besought mercy, calling her "mother!" A crowd, chiefly of children, had gathered around, and they proceeded

with the woman and the child. Morley wondered the child did not run, but he soon perceived she was unable to do so, apparently from exhaustion; one eye was bandaged up, and the other, we shudder as we write the fact, was blackened and bloodshot.

"For God's sake, stop!" called Morley aloud, approaching the crowd, followed by Ralph (the Captain made his exit from the scene, not before two Jew-boys had robbed him of his watch and pocket-handkerchief).

"What are you thinking about, woman? Cease!" Morley had seized the child, and, as if for protection, had covered her head with his coat.

"Who the h—ll are you?" roared the woman; but there was something in the eye which gazed into hers, so horrified, which silenced her, and she slunk away, leaving the child where he had placed her. She looked about twelve years of age, and might have been comely but for her terrible disfigurement and neglected aspect. The crowd increased, and Morley, taking out his

purse, containing a few sovereigns and some loose silver, offered to throw it among them if they would all disperse; the stratagem answered. With the exception of a few stragglers, they scuffled for the money and departed.

Morley, leading the sobbing girl kindly by the hand, followed the steps of the woman; Ralph walked on his other side and held, by his direction, his purse firmly in his hand. They stopped at the door of what appeared an old clothes shop, and the woman, who had not once turned her head, and appeared quite indifferent as to the actions of those in her rear, mounted a narrow creaking staircase, up which Morley groped his way, still holding the child's hand within his own, the tender pressure of which had soothed, for the time, her poor heart's bitterness. The woman stopped half-way up the flight—there was but one—and, turning round, faced Morley, and, greatly to his surprise, said, "Thank you."

Dark as it was he could see tears in her

eyes, and as she sank upon the stairs, as if exhausted, he noted her features, and marked that they were good, but pinched by want and destitution.

"How could you; oh! how could you?" he began.

"Ask me not," she broke in, humbly.

And he heard her, as she bowed her head, sob hysterically.

"Is this your child?" asked he, somewhat sternly, as the child began to sob too.

"Yes, my child. Would God had crushed her in the birth!"

"Hush! hush! Is that a mother's prayer? For shame!"

"You may well call it 'shame' who never knew the meaning of it; she is 'shame,' if you mean that?"

"How?"

"She's the child of as base a villain as was ever born of woman."

"But you must remember, my poor woman," said Morley, beginning to under-

stand, in part, the nature of the case, "that she is still your child."

"She is; and I—I am a fiend! I was once virtuous—good. Oh! my God!"

There is something awful in the call made upon the Great Disposer of human affairs, in such extremities as the present. So felt Ralph Thornton as he stood there, at the bottom of that crazy old staircase. Now, the situation was a delicate one for a young man like Morley to be placed in; he could only look upon the poor woman before him with the compassion he felt for all of her frail sisterhood, supposing that she, like thousands of others before and after her, had fallen, and then sunk lower and lower in infamy. He stood for some minutes advising and admonishing, and endeavouring by his words of consolation to lead the lost sheep back to the God she had forsaken, yet, upon whose name she still called so vehemently for shelter. He then placed a sovereign in her hand from Ralph's purse, and giving her a card with his London address upon it, told

her, if ever her necessity became insupportable, to apply there for help. He was surprised to find the poor child was fifteen years of age instead of twelve, as he had supposed; but want and misery stint the growth of stature and intellect too. She looked a diminutive mortal, indeed.

Finding the model Ralph sought resided in the next vile abode, the business of their expedition was soon accomplished, and the two friends retraced their steps quickly from these scenes of depravity; and Ernest Morley little thought that he had that day relieved one of the many victims of Blight in the form of the Widow Hopeful! now, alas! HOPELESS!

END OF VOL. II.

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